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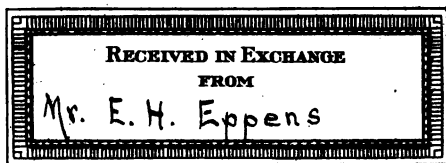
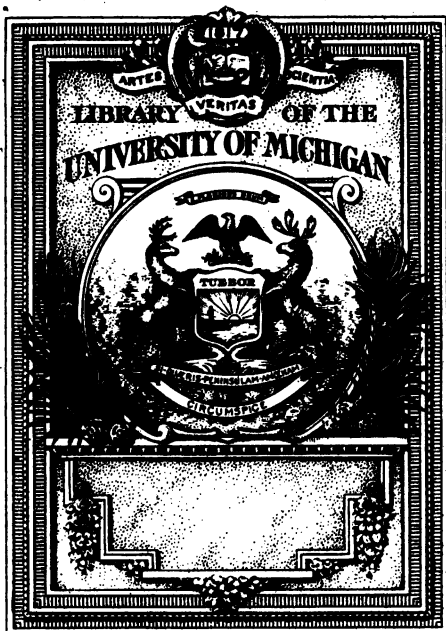
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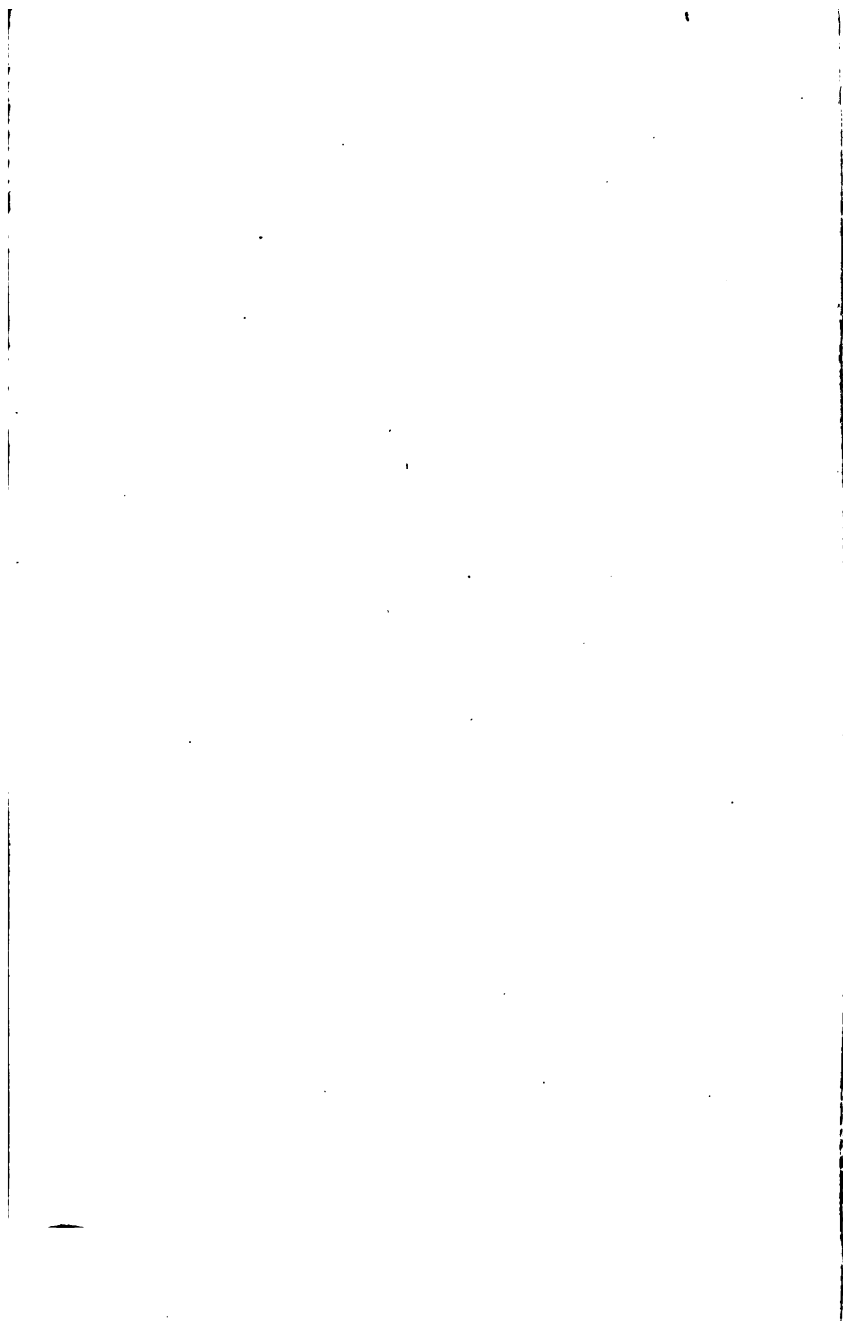
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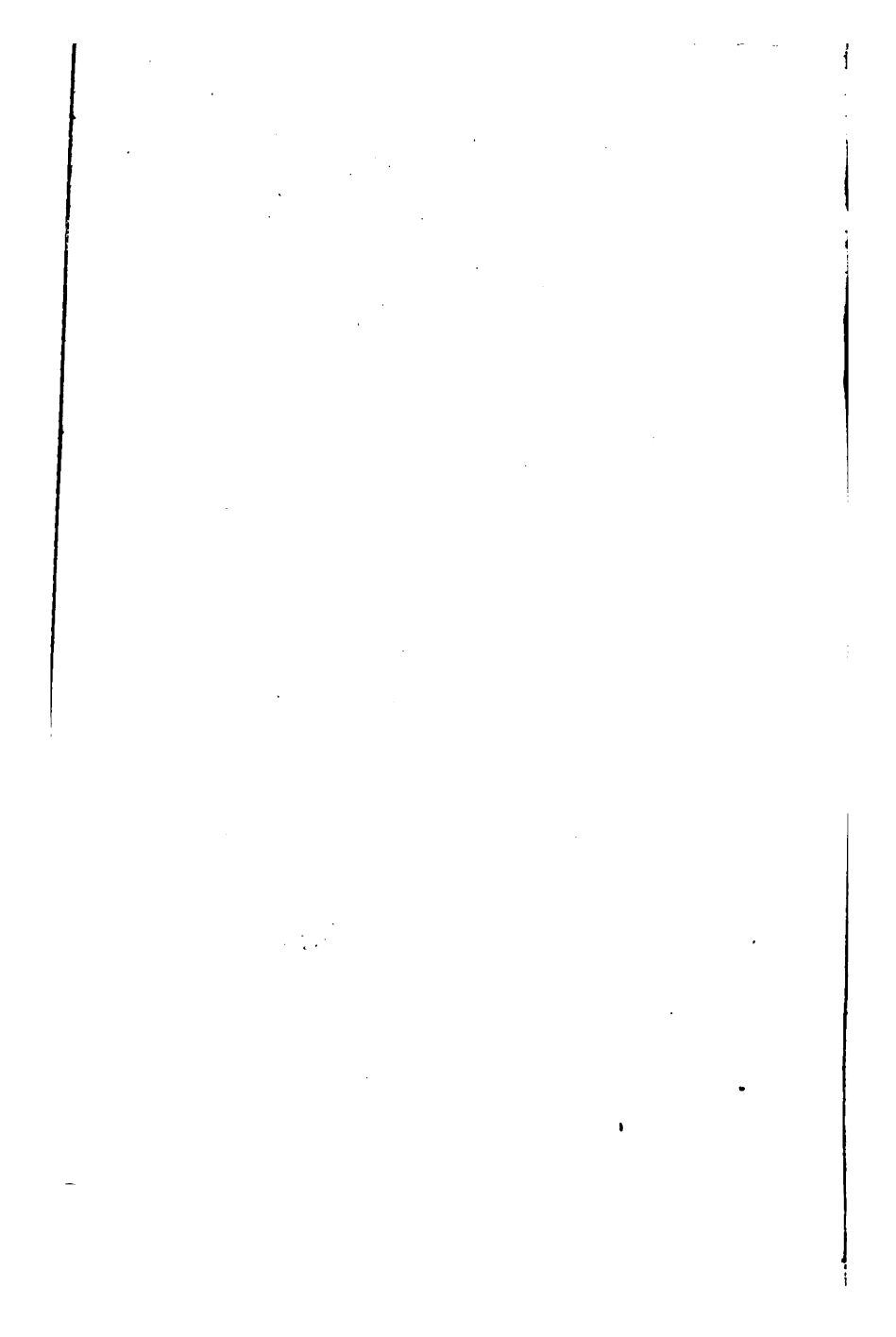
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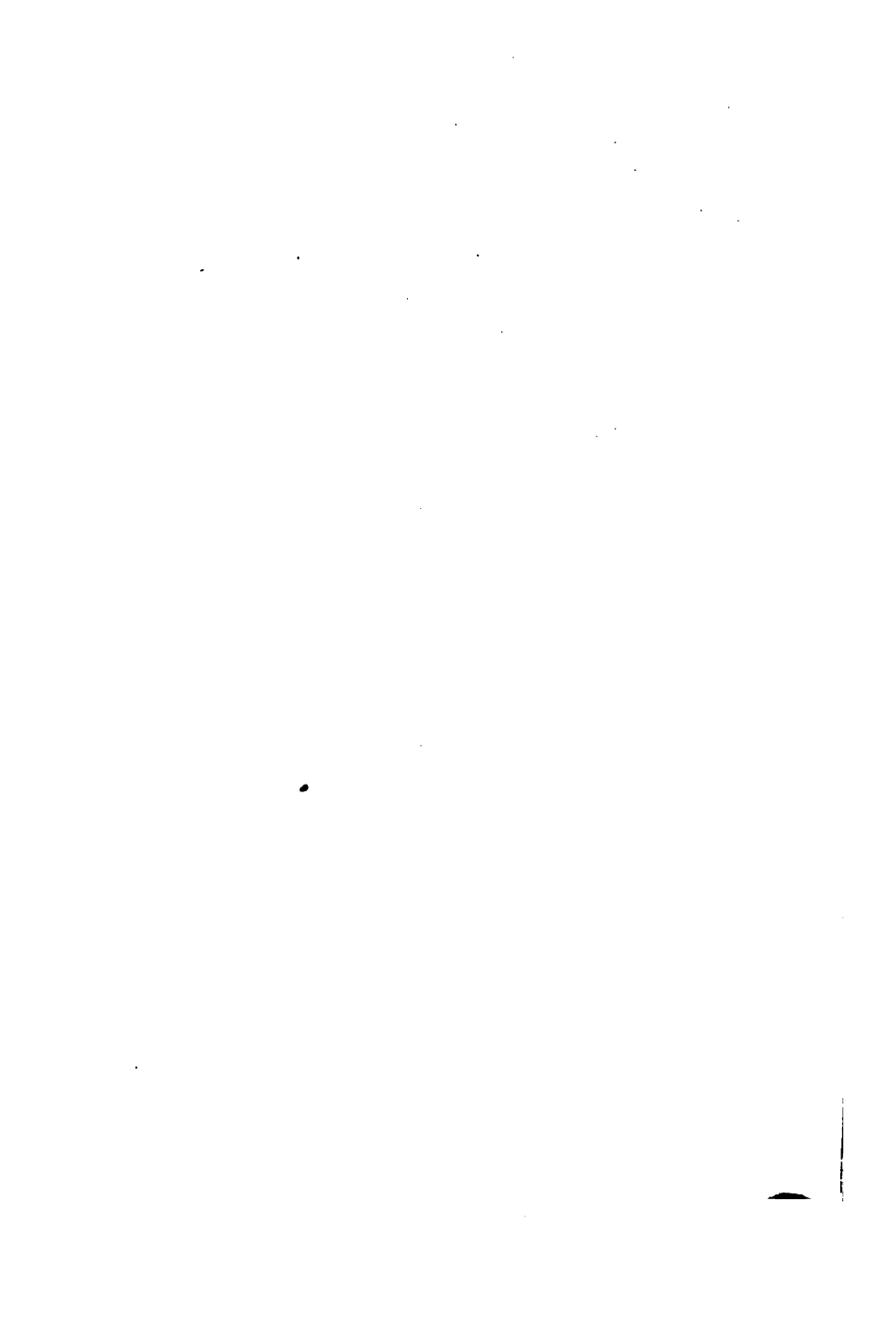
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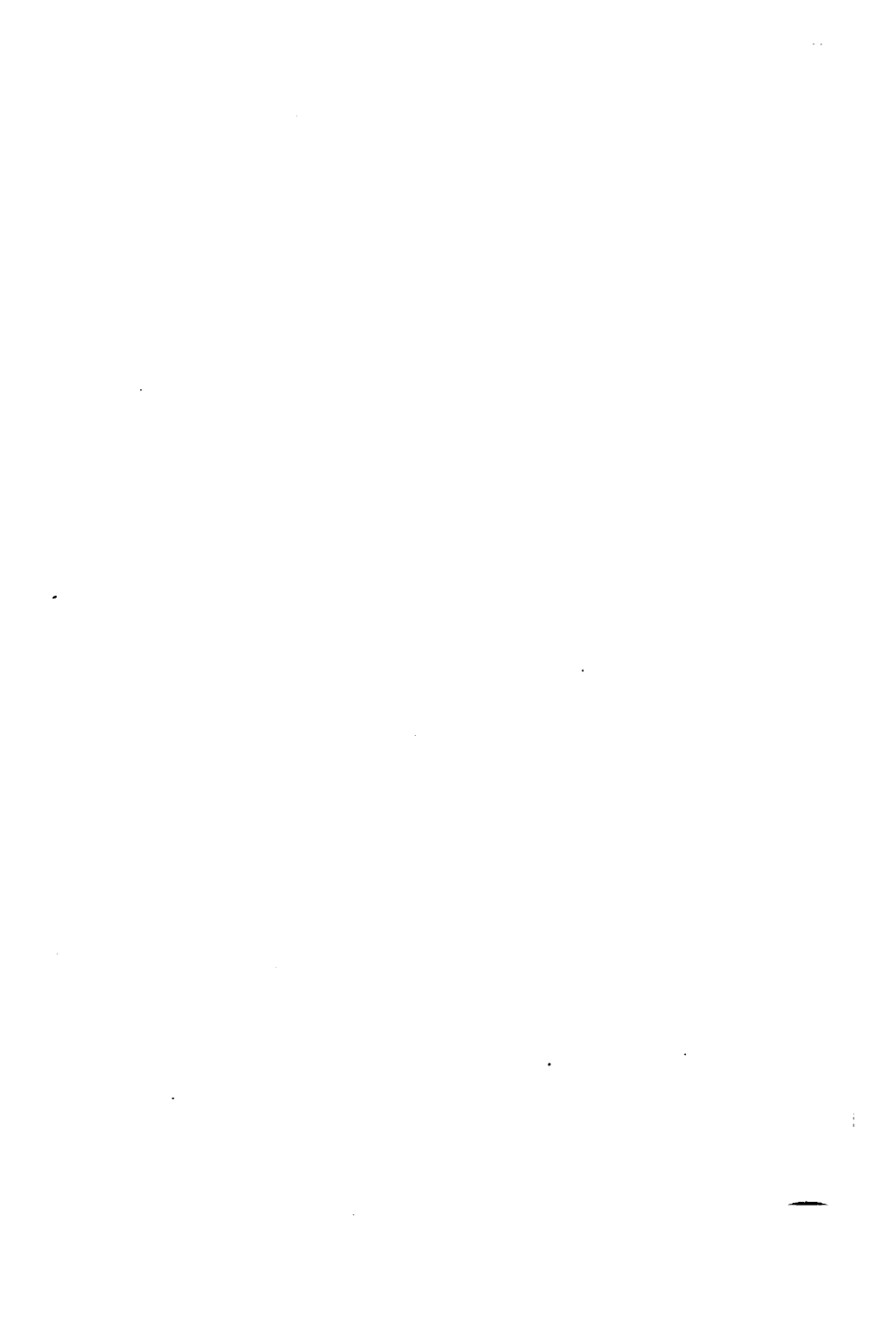


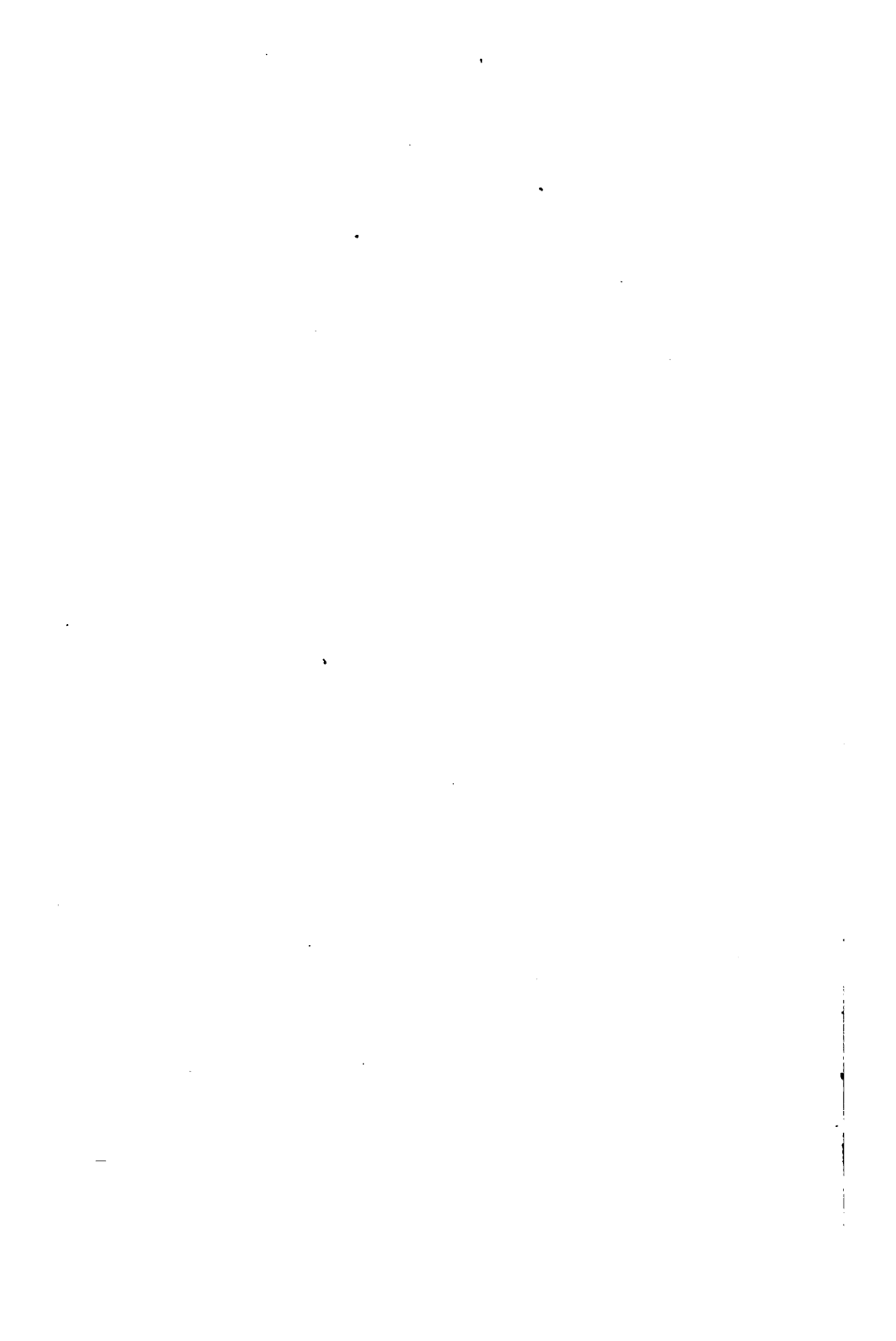
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SPIRIT AND LIFE

THOUGHTS FOR TO-DAY

BY
AMORY H. ^{WILL}BRADFORD, D.D.,
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MONTCLAIR, N. J.

One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
The Problem. —EMERSON.

SECOND EDITION

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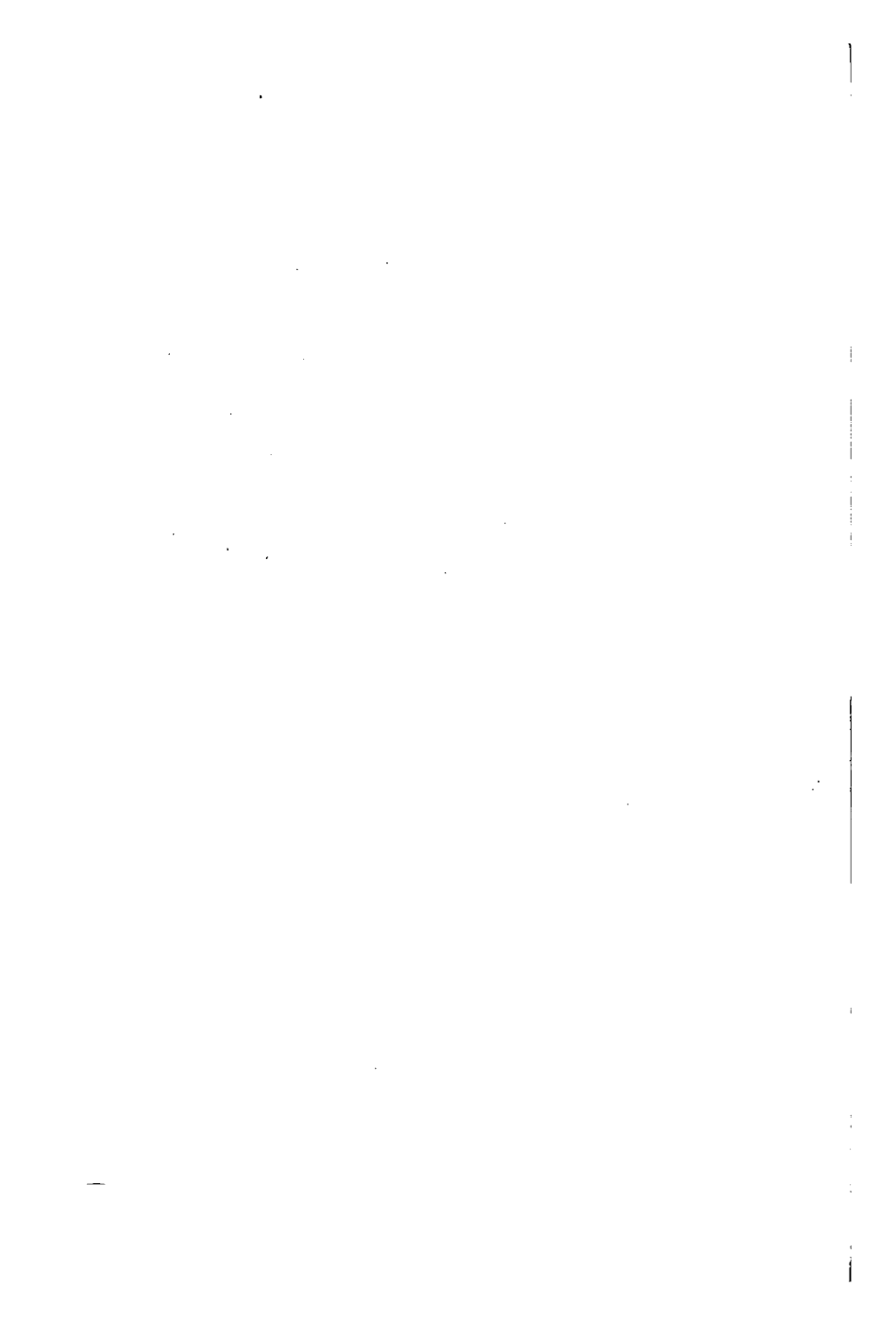


TO MY FATHER,

Benjamin F. Bradford, D.D.,

WHO THROUGH A LONG PUBLIC MINISTRY, AND STILL
MORE IN THE CIRCLE OF HIS HOME, HAS
ILLUSTRATED "THE SPIRIT AND
THE LIFE," THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

3-4-31/10/08



Exchange
E. H. Ekens
11-11-30

PREFACE.

THE most important of experiences is that which leads to a rational and credible idea of God. This cannot be taught in the schools. No man or body of men have authority to delineate it; the largest and noblest conception of the Deity ever possessed, even though imparted by revelation, has been at the best but a "broken light." And yet, on clear views of God hang the glory and usefulness of human life. If there is no God, there is no hope, life is a dream, and he is happiest who knows no waking. If God exists but has no care for men, or is interested only in the universe and not in individuals, then for us it were as well if there were no God.

The sermons in this volume revolve around two thoughts: (1) God has manifested himself in a form which can be understood by men. The Incarnation is not simply a dogma of theology, but something demanded by the heart of man, and—spiritually discerned—appealing to his

highest reason. It gives the only adequate conception of humanity, and the only definite idea of God. The Incarnation is "the light of men" concerning Deity, duty, destiny, and is the standard by which all pretended revelations are to be tested. It has relation to all time, and to all the universe. The Being disclosed in the Christ is the God of all worlds and of the eternities, and all things are in his hands and will be forever. The Incarnation, in short, condenses all that is revealed of God, and of his purpose concerning man. (2) The Deity is never far from humanity; he is always in contact with our spirits, and "the spiritual life" is the life of God manifesting itself through the spirits of men. The Holy Spirit is not "an influence," but God himself in spiritual operation and manifestation. The Christ declared that his work would be continued and completed by the Spirit which would abide forever in Christian hearts. This is fundamental. God is in living relation with all who submit their wills to his will, as it is made known in conscience and in Christ. Those who do that need no human teacher: they are led and inspired by the Spirit of God; they "have an anointing from the Holy One."

These sermons are none of them polemical. Indeed, controversy about the infinite and eternal among those who, however much they may differ among themselves, are all moving in the same

direction and seeking the same ends, is sheer absurdity. If any good has resulted from the "battles of the theologies" in the past, it has been only because God has made the wrath of man to praise him.

Without attempting any orderly discussion of dogmatic themes, I have brought together here a few of the results of a pastor's practical labor, and offer in these discourses something of what a patient study of God's Word and a reverent scrutiny of his works—"the two revelations"—have suggested to me concerning the Spirit and the Life. The fact that these partial views of truth have helped many in a narrow field to more satisfying conceptions of God, and to a more constant reliance on his Spirit in their search for truth, and in their attempt to face bravely the conflict and mystery of life, is the only excuse for offering them to an audience which may be larger and may be smaller.

Of the following sermons, the four on "The Holy Spirit" and the one entitled "The Appeal to Experience" have already appeared in *The Christian Union*. "The Vicarious Principle in the Universe" was read before the American Institute of Christian Philosophy, and "The Conditions of Spiritual Sight" was the first sermon preached before that Institute. Both have been published in *Christian Thought*. "The Theological Thought of our Time" is the substance of the

Baccalaureate Sermon before the class of 1884 of Wellesley College. It was afterward published in *The Advance*. The remaining sermons of the volume now appear in print for the first time, and all of them were originally prepared for my own congregation.

A. H. B.

First Congregational Church, Montclair, N. J.,
August 20, 1888.

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I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE FUNDAMENTAL
DOCTRINE.

“ We can only have an absolute harmony of opinion as to the Bible when there are no more new truths to be derived from it, or new questions raised concerning it, when its interpretation is perfected, and research regarding it completed. That will not be, I believe, before the day of doom.”—ROBERT FLINT, D.D., LL.D.

“ The words of the Christ have not their ground in an external authority. The signature of their authority is not in the instrument in which they appear, but their verification is to the Spirit. Their justification is to the conscience and the consciousness of men.”—ELISHA MULFORD, LL.D.

“ He is Thy best servant who looks not so much to hear that from Thee which himself wills, as rather to will that which from Thee he hears.”—ST. AUGUSTINE.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE OF CHRIS- TIANITY.

I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE FUNDAMENTAL DOC- TRINE.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."—*John* xvi. 12, 13.

ST. PAUL says that when he was a child he thought as a child, but when he became a man he put away childish things. Experience brings wisdom. The proportions of things change with our years. What once was all-important becomes unimportant; what was once scarcely noticed becomes the truth that regulates thinking. I have come to believe that the most fundamental and practical of all the doctrines of Christianity, for our time and for all centuries since the Apostles, is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This conviction, which to some may seem exaggerated, and to others unfounded, is

the result of a study of the teachings of Christ, and of the conditions in which men live.

Let us consider certain facts. These facts all rest on the accepted truthfulness of the Christian Scriptures. Nothing is to be questioned. Only undoubted facts are considered. The first of these is:

Christianity is a life. It is not a philosophy. A man becomes a Christian by being born from above. A man is a Platonist who accepts the philosophy of Plato, and a Kantian who accepts the philosophy of Kant, and a Calvinist who accepts the philosophy of Calvin; but a man may believe all the teachings of Jesus and be a devil. Not belief, but life, makes a man a Christian. Jesus gave no system of philosophy. His scattered teachings are no more like theology than a vase of lilies and roses is like a text-book on botany, or than the stars are like a book on astronomy. He who has Christ's life is a Christian, whatever his name. "Whosoever loveth is born of God." He who has not Christ's life is not a Christian, whatever he believes. How is this life communicated? By voluntary choice of Jesus Christ as Master and Lord, by the substitution of his life for our life. He who thus opens himself to Christ receives the very life of God. That, I think, is a fair statement of the faith of Christendom. But now certain searching questions arise.

How can we get life by connecting ourselves

with One who has been dead and out of sight for nearly two thousand years? How can we, in any but the most abstract and figurative way, come into relation with him? "But," some one says, "we are inspired by the words he spoke; we touch his thoughts." Yes, but his words in themselves are no more than any other words. Apart from himself his characteristic teachings have no remarkable meaning. Any carpenter could say, "If you confess your sins, you will be forgiven;" but what would it amount to? Jesus is believed, not because of what he taught, but because of what he was. And I am asked to take the word of a dead leader? No, there must be something deeper and more vital than that for my faith to rest upon. "But Jesus is not dead; he has risen, and lives in heaven with God." I do not see that that helps matters much. If our faith must bridge an abyss either of time or space, if there is no present personal relation with some one who is as truly alive and as near as ever, I, for one, must give up the whole scheme. Those who lived when Jesus lived may have believed in him because of his mighty works. But we did not live then, and he has died, and thus submitted to the same law to which we are subject; and if death ended his ministry, there is no reason for thinking more highly of him than of others. He cannot give life. Moreover, if he is in some remote heaven, you and I cannot go to him; he might transform

me if he were on the earth, but he is absent. If he has left us, that ends the matter.

Thus we are brought to the fact that the work which Jesus began must be carried on by some one who can get as near to the thought and will of man as Jesus did, or the growth of his kingdom will end in a dream. Soldiers will never long follow a dead leader. His memory may be revered, and may inspire for awhile, but the only man who can lead the generations is one always present and always alive.

There is apparently no person on the earth who can speak with the authority of Christ. Romanists claim that prerogative for the Church; and the Pope, as the head of the Church, to be the vicegerent of Christ. If I were preaching to Romanists, it might be well to argue that point; but as I am addressing those who do not believe it, I will let it pass, only remarking that there is nothing of the teaching of Christ extant on which to base that claim. It rests, not on Scripture, but on tradition.

And now I come to something about which I ask careful attention. It has been thought best by some to ignore or cover up facts because it was feared that they would weaken faith. But an unsettling will be the greatest of blessings to those whose faith can be weakened by fuller knowledge. There is a great gulf between refusal to think and intelligent faith.

Can the Bible take the place of Jesus Christ

in the world? No: there is no reason to think he ever thought it would. Life cannot come from a book; life can come only from life. Christ never once referred to the composition of the New Testament. It is a book. It is composed of the same words as any other book. To learn what those words mean we must study uninspired grammars and lexicons and become acquainted with languages which have been dead for hundreds of years. There has not, so far as known, been a single manuscript of the original writings of the Bible preserved. There is no copy of any book of the Bible extant which was made less than three hundred years after Christ. Some of the books are not complete even in copies—as the Gospel of Mark. The authors of many of the books are unknown—as the Epistle to the Hebrews. The copies possessed have not been kept free from errors in transcribing, or from interpolation—as, for instance, the passage in John's First Epistle about the "three that bear record in heaven," which is eliminated in the Revised Version. Some of the earlier copies differ widely from the later ones. The question of what books should be in the New Testament was never settled by our Lord, nor with his authority, so far as we know. For three hundred years after his time there was not unanimity among his followers on this subject. No General Council of the Church ever passed upon the question of the canon. Individual Christians

are dependent on translations. We read the English Bible, the Germans the German Bible, and so on through the languages of the world. Missionaries translate the Bible as soon as they can, and they do right; but what endless corrections they would make if they knew Hebrew and Greek, Chinese and Hindustanee, better! All the consecrated scholarship of missionaries has not yet made a translation of the Bible into Chinese which will not be materially changed within a few years! I speak of Goethe, and you say, "O, it is impossible to translate his finest passages. There is in them a fragrance too evanescent for translation." If that is true of Goethe, how much more true of David and of Job! Of the teachings of Jesus not one of us ever read one word in the language in which it was spoken. He spoke in Aramaic; what they remembered of that which he spoke in Aramaic, his disciples, years after his death, wrote down in Greek or Hebrew, and we read still another translation in English. If we were to get the very manuscript which Matthew wrote, we should find all the words which Jesus spoke to be translations of recollections of those words. Consider these facts, and then remember how we dispute about words, how great quarrels grow up because we do not use words alike. If we had no other faith but that in the Bible, which we gladly accept as the Word of God, would our religion rest on an immovable foundation? Have words

such invariable significance that they can be implicitly and universally trusted?

We have not only to read, we have to interpret, the Bible. The real Bible is not the words; for they, in different arrangement, exist in other books. The real Bible is the meaning which the writers meant to convey by means of those words. If we would find its exact significance, we must not only get at what it seems to mean, but at what those who wrote it meant. But you say, "That is plain to all who are willing to know." Let me ask, then, how two such consecrated men as John Calvin and John Wesley should have differed so widely concerning its teachings. Persons speaking the same tongue, and living near each other, use the same words with different meanings. One man has made nine different translations of one Latin hymn; he finds something new in it each time he translates it. Compare Carey's Dante with Longfellow's, or Pope's Iliad with Bryant's. Words do not always mean the same to different men when other books are read; why do we suppose they can have but one meaning when the Bible is studied? Does salvation depend upon our use, or upon anybody's use, of a grammar and lexicon? upon the pointing of a vowel, or the placing of a preposition? That would be a poor foundation for faith. Moreover, to be absolutely sure of the meaning of an ancient writing, we must know the circumstances which caused it to be

written, and the object of its composition, and so on, almost endlessly.

And yet—that jailer at Philippi cried out, “What must I do to be saved?” and was baptized, without ever having seen a word of the New Testament. That Japanese who came to this country, working his passage, to learn more about Jesus, had seen only one leaf from the Gospel of John. He is now a leader in the new civilization in Japan. Missionaries make converts before they make translations. The story of Uncle Tom and Eva is in a work of fiction, but it is history also. Multitudes who did not know His name when they saw it have had new life from Christ and have died for him. And so I am forced, not reluctantly but gladly, to the conclusion that there is some power in the world which does not come from that tomb in Palestine, and which is more vital than can possibly be put into a book, even though that book were written by the very finger of God. Suppose that, when that Japanese landed in Boston seeking to know Jesus, he had learned that the leaf he had read was from a novel, and that the character was fictitious; suppose he had learned that He was a hero of an age long past, and that now He had existence only in history, would the sun have risen on Japan?

Again, Christianity places upon the individual the terrible responsibility of choice. It is full of invitations. “Come! come! come!” This is the

keynote of its music; but to what? Come to a dead Master? Come to a book that is only a book—the history of an otherwise forgotten era? If that were all, few would heed the invitation. What is it that makes men listen and obey when the invitations of Jesus are spoken? What is it that makes the Bible unique among books, and even its words germs of life? Suppose Socrates had said, “Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” who in this nineteenth century would heed him? Jesus spoke the same words nearly two thousand years ago, and millions of men still go unto him with gladness and thanksgiving. “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” If the alternative was a Master who has left this earth forever, or present gratification, Jesus would have no followers. Choice is always between motives. Who would prefer a dead leader, with sacrifice and suffering, to present pleasure? And yet millions of men of strength and discernment are choosing to be followers of Jesus, and are giving up pleasure, profit, power, and enduring toil and pain for the privilege of serving him.

Christianity also teaches the duty of prayer. Individuals and the church are not supposed to offer prayer to One who is visible or apparently near, but to One who is separated by the diameter of the space between the physical and the spiritual. Those who judge simply by what is visible, naturally consider prayer the greatest of

absurdities. "The idea! You Christians kneel in your homes and churches, and expect that your words will pass through walls and up through spaces and reach the ear of One who is imagined to be at the same time listening with equal intensity to millions of others. Prayer to One to whom you are visible and who is visible to you is conceivable, but prayer to a far-away, invisible King—why, it is absurd, that is all! If God is beyond the stars, how long will it take for our voices to reach him?" This is the way that those who are not Christians talk; and, if there is nothing more to Christianity than a dead Christ, a book which millions never can understand aright, a solemn command to pray to an absent God, then that is the way we also would talk.

We have thus considered some of the chief doctrines of Christianity, and have found that by themselves they are lifeless and comparatively useless. We are, however, overwhelmed by our consciousness of sin and our need of Divine help and pardon. Sin and suffering are eternal facts. They knock at Nature's door and will not go away. Breaking hearts come to Christianity as to a forlorn hope. There must be help in that, or there is nothing in the universe but desolation and death. What gospel, what good news, for those who come with agony and remorse to Calvary, and find there nothing but a cross and One hanging upon it—dead? They will go away saying, "This deepens the darkness; death is the

only hope—perhaps that leads to unconsciousness; let us die.”

These facts make indispensable what I have presumed to call the fundamental doctrine of Christianity—that is, the one which makes truths otherwise barren and dead to glow with immortal life. Men want some one to save them and to sympathize with them now. If salvation depends on a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, on accuracy of copying, on correct interpretation, most will think that there is little chance for them. If prayer is to a far-away God, and our voices must reach beyond the stars, most will not care to pray. But Christianity teaches that Christ died, and rose, and ever liveth. He said to his disciples, “It is expedient for you that I go away.” The Comforter, he said, could not be present while he was in the flesh. Why? Because men then were like men now. They were thinking about everything but the spirituality of his mission; they were haggling about offices; they were asking who should be greatest; they were jealous of one another; they were anxious for personal recognition. “It is necessary for you that I go away, in order that you may understand that the real Christ is spiritual, and his mission a spiritual mission.” But did he leave men? He said, “I will send the Comforter,” but that word “Comforter” in the original is the same word which is elsewhere applied to Christ himself. John, in his epistle, says, “We have an

Advocate with the Father," and the word "Advocate" is exactly the same word here translated "Comforter." Christ also said that he would come again, and that those then living should see him. As Jesus Christ was God in human relations, continuing a work for the salvation of men, so the Holy Spirit is God carrying on that work, not far away but nearer to men now than Jesus himself ever was, as spirit can get nearer to spirit than body to spirit. How near can spirit get to spirit? My friend's body may be in China; my friend's spirit is in my spirit, so that I think his thoughts and do as he wishes. My friend's body is in the ground mingling with the common earth, but he himself is here, more intensely alive than ever, so that I live to carry out his purposes. Paul said, "Christ liveth in me." That was literally true. God, not far away and unloving, but as near as spirit can get to spirit; God, not leaving us to a book that he has inspired, but coming nearer than any book can come, and then helping us to understand that book; God, not asking us to cry so that our voices can pierce the spaces, but telling us to remember that he is nigh us, even in our hearts—this is the teaching of Christianity concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is more than an influence distilled from the upper air. He is not manifested chiefly, nor usually, nor perhaps ever, in emotion or ecstasy or the absurd frenzy which among ignorant people masquerades in the dress

of piety. Only a living Saviour can reach and uplift humanity.

Jesus expressly declared, just before his death, that he had not revealed all the truth that he wanted men to know: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But he does not stop there; he continues: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." This teaches that, just as Jesus brought the Gospel to earth, so there are other messages to come from God to men, by the Spirit of God in their hearts. When will they be spoken? He does not tell. Who shall voice them? He does not answer. He leaves that whole mystery, just as the mystery of his coming was left among Jewish women. Each Jewish woman, in the vague and holy anticipation of motherhood, wondered if she would not be chosen to be the mother of the Messiah; and each Christian, high or low, humble or prominent, little child or aged man, should live so that, if the Spirit of God shall choose to voice through him some truth for which the world has waited, he will be ready to receive and utter it. Christ declared that all truth was not known when he died; and all truth is not yet known, and will not be known for centuries and millenniums. Unwise and disobedient are those who hear only voices from the past and expect none in the present or the future. Christ recognized the need of something more than grammar and lexicon in order to un-

derstand the Bible. Of the Spirit he said : " He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you ; " that is, make plain the words already spoken but not understood. Again he gathered his teaching on this subject into a single sentence and said : " He shall teach you all things "—that is, the truths not yet revealed—" and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

We are following not a dead, but a living, Leader ; we have now with us One who interprets the things which Christ spoke, and who, if he wishes, may use even those living to-day for the expression of truth of which the world has never yet heard. Is there any reason why God's Spirit could use a fisherman to voice a divine message in the first century, and not be able to do the same in the nineteenth ? Is there any reason to think that God has exhausted himself, and has no more to tell men ? Or are we already so wise that we need no more ? God is not dead, and he is not limited ; God, not far away and inactive, but in human hearts, carrying on now, without visible form, exactly the same work that our Master began in the flesh—this is the fundamental doctrine.

And it is more than a doctrine. It is something manifest and almost demonstrable. There was nothing of Christianity in the world but a dead criminal, a dying thief, a few faithful women, and one half-hearted man : that was all which could be seen. From that day until the present a new force has been at work. That man

who was apparently dead has been most intensely alive. The suffering have gone to him, and have realized what he meant when he said, "My peace I give unto you;" those whom remorse had almost driven mad have gone to him, and we have seen them sitting clothed and in their right mind; those who were dishonest, impure, intemperate, debauched in body and soul, have become the helpers of the world's salvation simply by following him. O, it is a wonderful story, how, from faith in him, men have gone up on chariots of fire with songs on their lips! How, from faith in him, women have taken their lives in their hands and gone to the uttermost parts of the earth, simply to tell how good and helpful he is! How, from trusting in a present Father, families which have been broken have found the space between the seen and the unseen but a step which is soon to be taken! How those who could not read even a word of their Bible have believed as seeing Him who is invisible, and gone through the sins and sorrows of earth with the sunlight on their faces, simply by keeping their hearts open and pure! It is wonderful how God, by his Spirit, has chosen the weak of the earth to confound the mighty. A miner's son, who sang in the streets for his bread, led the Reformation and unbound the Bible for the world. A farmer, with the Spirit of God in him, laid broad and deep the foundations of England's liberty. A jail-bird was so transformed that he was able to write the story of

Pilgrim's Progress. In the praying of four country boys under a haystack was the beginning of American missions. A lonely man, with the living Christ in his heart, who died in the attitude of prayer, with his head pillowed on his Bible, traversed Africa from ocean to ocean and opened the path along which civilization and religion are already moving, and this with no object but to tell men of Jesus and his love. Christ said that, when he went away from sight, he would come again; that his work should go on; that his word should be interpreted; that new truths, and new light on old truths, should be given; and never were words spoken which have been more abundantly or evidently verified. He said to his disciples, "Because I *live*, ye shall live also;" and he says to us, "Because I *live*, ye shall live also."

The Holy Spirit verifies all the characteristic doctrines of Christianity. He shows us that we follow a Leader who is not dead, but who is Lord of life; that giving up his body did not destroy his power, but that this was the condition of its proper and permanent exercise. He is with each one who, willing to learn, reads the Bible, and takes care that he shall find in its pages the truth which he most needs. He is with us when we pray—nearer than our nearest friends; he lives, and he gives us our life; and the history of the last eighteen hundred years, with its prophecy of better days, with its brightening hope, with its increase of brotherhood, with its peace for the sor-

rowing, with its triumph for the dying, has emphasized with ever-deepening emphasis the words of him who said, "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you."

It follows, from what has preceded, that attitude of will is more important than knowledge of truth. Men may be situated so that it is impossible for them to study even their Bibles. I once talked with a man about his soul, and he spoke to me something as follows: "I was born in a coal-mine, in England. I was never taught to read. I have had to work so hard that I have never had time to learn. I don't know anything but how to dig in a mine. How can you expect anything of me?" More than half the world is in the same condition, and they cannot get out of it if they try. The most of the Bible, even if they read it, they cannot understand. But God is near them, and the important thing for them, as for us, is to keep all the faculties open, so that when he comes he can get in. If Christianity were a philosophy, it might depend on education and environment. It is a life—God's life in man—and he who says to God, "I do not know much about you, I do not know much about anything; but I know that I am a sinner, and I want to be better, and whatever you tell me I will do, even if it is to die"—that man is open to God, and in his heart the *life* will grow; and, from obeying God as He is revealed to him, he will learn more of God than from a thousand preachers and a million books.

When one comes to me and talks about the constitution of the church, and says It is this, while another says It is that; and when one says that I have not obeyed Christ if I have not gone under water all over, while another says it makes no difference how baptism is applied; and when one says, "You should accept this confession of faith," while another says, "You should accept that,"—I may be pardoned if I become confused and wonder if anything is really known. The confusion of the denominations, the battles of the theologies, are enough to disturb even the elect. If any one here is thus troubled, I say to him, "My brother, Christ said to his disciples that his Spirit would lead into all truth. Trust that Spirit. Ministers are fallible; churches are fallible; human powers are fallible. Those who have most confidence in themselves are usually most distrusted by their neighbors. Do not look toward men; look toward God. He cannot go wrong, however weak, however ignorant, who trusts in God to lead him. Trusting in God to lead is trusting in the Holy Spirit. We may be excused for ignorance which we cannot help, for natural dullness, for little time, for inherited bias; but nothing can excuse us for not keeping our hearts open to God. Persistent refusal to do that is the unpardonable sin.

This, then, is the conclusion of all. Our eyes may misread the Bible; those who are set to interpret it may give us their own theories instead

of Christ's truth ; our circumstances may keep us in darkness which we cannot break: but nothing except our own will can prevent us from knowing what we ought to know, and from doing what we ought to do. If a single human being turns sincerely to God for guidance and help, and receives no answer of light and power, I am ready to say that I cannot see how such a Holy Spirit as Jesus Christ promised can have any existence, or Christianity itself be anything but a dream.

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE.

" Everything is mysterious, nothing is magical, in the process of conversion; the laws of our nature are observed therein, and we do not for a moment cease to be men."—ALEXANDER VINET.

" Christ is risen, and is a living presence in the household of his disciples, more a presence in his invisible church to-day than he ever was in the synagogues of Palestine, or even the upper chamber of Jerusalem. The resurrection of his body is a parable of a diviner resurrection, the uprising of the spirit when he has made it to live in him, endowed with a new being, and already, here and now, in fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, entering into life eternal."—LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D.

" If the Holy Ghost were withdrawn, the Christ would be absent and of none effect to us. But if the Holy Ghost is present and active in us, we dwell in the full flood of the light and of the life of God, and of his Christ."—A. A. HODGE, D.D., LL.D.

" Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed
With us to dwell.

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And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness
Are his alone."

HARRIET AUBER.

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE.

“ And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you.”—*1 John* ii. 12.

THE Christian life is begun and sustained by the opening of the heart to a Spirit. It is not physical life. Its beginning, its continuance, and its consummation are all in the Spirit. We know what our hands feel and our eyes see; we know also what we believe and whom we love. A bruise on the body hurts; a bruise on the affections is equally painful. A fracture or a sprain causes suffering; broken ideals or strained relations between friends cause suffering even more intense. That which concerns the spirit is as real as that which concerns the body, and far more permanent. The appeal of Christ was to the spiritual nature. Not once did he enter into rivalry with those who offered something material and visible. His disciples thought he came to found a kingdom: he said, “The kingdom of God is within you.” His disciples looked for outward signs: he said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

He came to those who were lonely and desolate, but gave them no visible friend ; he simply told them to lift their eyes and behold their Father—a Spirit. He came to those who expected an earthly deliverer, and went about improving their condition by forgiving their sins. There is a deep symbolism in the fact that he healed a man sick of the palsy by saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." By that he said, practically, "Get your spiritual nature right and the physical will take care of itself." All that he did for the body was in order that he might reach the soul.

Christ began his movement on the moral life by an appeal to the spirits of men. He told men that they were what their hearts were. "You judge by the outside ; that is Pharisaism ; God judges by what men think and will and love. Murder is not the killing, it is hating ; adultery is not outward act, but inward thought ; prayer is not simply asking for something—a man cannot begin to pray until he has done all he can to put himself in right relations with those who feel unkindly toward him." He said that the new life was from God, who is a Spirit ; that its beginning was viewless, like the wind, and its growth silent, like that of a seed. When he went away from the earth he left everything to the Spirit. So far as we know, he never wrote a word ; he left no book or letter or will ; he impressed his spirit upon the spirits of a few common people. He did not found a church ; he did not organize a

society; he did not write the Bible; he lived and taught and died—that was all which was visible. Before he died, he told his followers that when he was gone they would have an invisible and spiritual substitute for him; that that substitute would recall his words to their remembrance, and show them what he himself had intended to teach,—would lead them into all truth. He named this guide “the Spirit of truth.” And this Spirit of truth is to remain. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.”

On the earth our Lord made his appeal entirely to the spiritual nature; now that he has gone, the Spirit of truth remains. The life of the child of God is life in the care and under the guidance of the Spirit of truth. The time will never come when the appeal will be made to any but spiritual motives. And any growth of organization or creed or ritual is earthly if it calls attention to itself and obscures our vision of God and of the love and service due to the immortal spirits around us. Christ teaches us to look at men, not as animals—movable bodies who may get in our way and have to be pushed aside; not as things which may be put under our feet; but rather as fellow-spirits. Man is more than a mass of matter to stay in its present position until the cement which keeps its particles together fails to hold; he is the spirit-child of the Spirit-God. His organized body will become dust;

spirit is indestructible. Thus are we to think of men.

Life under guidance of the Divine Spirit is the life of the disciple of Christ. We put our aspirations into the hand of God, and his desires and ideals for us become our own desires and ideals. We put our hearts into God's hand, and what he chooses becomes our love for time and eternity. This may, to some, appear hard ; but those who seem to be living without love are only waiting for God's Spirit to lead them to their true and lasting affinity. We put our minds under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, and the man who does that cannot long believe an error.

Each man lives in two worlds ; in the upper world are spirits, in the under world are bodies. Man is like a steamship, in whose dark and lurid depths are a score or more of blazing furnaces ; at their open mouths stand half-naked men feeding them—heat, force, noise, confusion everywhere. If there were nothing but furnaces and engines, stokers and engineers, the steamer would soon be on the rocks. In those depths are fires blazing, engines throbbing, wheels turning—nothing but force ; it cannot see icebergs nor avoid breakers. Left to itself, steam is an agency of destruction ; but guided by intelligence, that force impels steamers, runs mills, spins cloth, binds the world into brotherhood. There is more to a steamer than furnaces and engines. Up in the light is a compass pointing northward ;

up in the sky is a star always telling where the north is; on the deck is a man alert to know which way is north—a man who is guided by compass and star. Now, let the star stand for the Spirit of God, and the captain for your spirit and mine. The captain is directed by the star, and he in turn puts his hand upon the wheel which connects with the rudder; thundering cranks, ponderous shafts, and that fierce and terrible screw straightway become obedient, and the ship, like a thing of life, flies with a thousand souls on board from continent to continent, beneath benignant skies, through howling storms or blinding fogs. The higher life, itself under the direction of that which is highest, controls all below it. The ship's rudder is bound by invisible lines to the north star; and the earthly life of every Christian is thrilled by inspirations from the Spirit of God along lines equally invisible. Without that Spirit man would be like a steamer amidst icebergs and breakers and fogs and storms, with furnaces roaring, engines thundering, screw hurrying, with no rudder, no captain, no north star.

This, then, is the first point emphasized to-day. The whole Christian experience is primarily and predominantly spiritual. Everything in business and politics and society is subservient to the Spirit of God.

Everything in the kingdom of God is individual. The principle of solidarity never interferes

with individuality. In the profoundest experiences each is alone. Deepest griefs are incommunicable. Each is responsible for himself. There is no companionship in death. You and I are parts of the universe, and yet isolated from every creature. The sunlight rests upon all created things, and yet it singles out a lily-of-the-valley and a violet and pours its splendor on them as if there were no other flowers. The Spirit of God is for all men, and yet it is equally for each man. Each is dealt with according to his peculiarities. It does not follow that because we are all led by one Spirit we shall have the same theological opinions, any more than the same political opinions; all will not be impelled to go as missionaries, or to use the same forms of worship. Individuality is a universal principle; everywhere the created thing is true to what distinguishes it, and the Creator reveals himself according to the laws of the object through which he works. God made men individuals, and it is probable that he means they shall continue such. Christ called his disciples individually; he loved them individually; he died for them individually. The appeals of the Gospel are to individuals; its invitations are to individuals; and the heart of each man craves individual recognition and help. Can you think of your children only in a group, and never separately? Do you love them in a lump? Do you not adapt your training to the peculiarities of each? Do you expect the same

things of the obtuse child as of the bright one? Do you hold the delicate, frail little creature to the same standards of accountability as the one who is strong and well? Do you not ask whether your child knew what you wanted before punishing him for not doing? Do you give the same advice to your boys as to your girls? One man is a poet, and the Spirit deals with him as a poet, and makes him a David, or an Isaiah, or a John; or, coming to later times, a Milton, or a Tennyson, or a Whittier. Another has the gift of expressing truths in symbolical or pictorial forms, and the same Spirit leads him to paint a Madonna, or a Holy Family, or a Crucifixion, or to copy the colors of an autumnal landscape, or to show men God's beauty in the flaming splendors of a sunset. One has what we call mechanical genius, and the same Spirit makes him an inventor, a finder-out of nature's secrets, who causes steam to do the work of horses, makes cold and sullen metals breathe celestial harmonies, shows how invisible elements can carry messages of love and hate. Another has the faculty of expressing spiritual truth so as to be helpful to men, and he becomes a teacher or preacher. And all these are led by the same Spirit. It is not necessary that all should know their leader in order to feel his influence. Many are debtors to the Spirit of God who do not know it or will not confess it. He moves upon hearts as the wind upon an organ,

bringing from each pipe the music which it is voiced to express.

He follows us wherever we go. That mother's face gathered out of the air, looking with tender, tearful, beseeching eyes, just as you were about to commit an awful sin,—where did it come from? That voice which seemed to speak your very name clearly and distinctly in the midst of a thousand voices,—whose was it? That message from a stranger; that note from an old song; that word spoken in church by one who never interested you before and which went straight to your heart, turning your whole nature toward hopes to which you had long been dead; that faithful, hopeful, unreprouchful, loving hand outstretched to you just at the moment when you felt that there was nothing ahead but a grave not far off,—who sent them to you? The peace and strength which have come to you like dew on a crushed flower, and which found you when you buried your heart and said, "There is nothing for me now but desolation and death,"—where did they come from? And that patient, tireless, prayerful ministry of friends who will not stop praying for you whatever you do, and those silent influences which cannot be escaped,—whence are they? That unrest which will not cease until the profoundest questions of existence are answered; that consciousness of isolation which separates a guilty soul from all the world and makes the very air seem full of

blazing eyes staring at him,—whence are these? And, last, and most wonderful of all, that strange and mystic force which, as silently as the day dawns, turns from selfishness, sensuality, and stubbornness, reveals a Father whose love is as fathomless as that shadowed by the cross, opens possibilities of service beginning here and ending never, changes the discord and despair of life into the music of endless hope,—whence is it? These things cannot be from the depths, for the hands in the depths reach up to drag down; they cannot be from those who are blind like ourselves; they are explicable only as the fulfillment of the promise of Him who said, “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you,” and who said also, “He knoweth His own sheep by name.”

“How may we know whether we are led by the Spirit or not?” Well, how do we know anything? Test it, negatively and positively.

One thing may be laid down as an axiom: We who have reason and eyes and ability to decide between right and wrong ought seldom to be guided by mere impulse. People pray for the Spirit to lead them, and expect an inward impulse; that is as likely to be wrong as right. It is absurd for a person who has powers of discernment to depend on impulses. They are no indication of the Spirit's leading.

The Spirit never leads a man to do a selfish or unkind thing, nor anything which, unless hin-

dered by some outside force, will cause pain or injury to another. The Spirit is God continuing Christ's work of salvation without the physical manifestation. Am I led to do to some one around me something which, in the exercise of common honesty, I know the Lord Jesus Christ would not do if he were in my place? Then I am acting from selfish motives. The Holy Spirit continues and extends the work of the Saviour; he never contradicts it. This principle can be easily applied. It tears the masks from multitudes of shams. Some, because of lack of personal recognition or fancied neglect, find an outlet for pique in desperate devotion to some "principle" for which in their hearts they care little. This is not of the Spirit. Loyalty to truth for truth's sake is always from God. The Spirit never leads a man to do an unkind, an ungenerous, an unmanly thing; it never leads him to say of another that which he would be unwilling to have said of himself, if it were true; it never leads him to misrepresent any truth, although the smallness of his nature may compel a partial and imperfect understanding and expression of truth. Nothing is from the Spirit which violates the teaching or example of Christ. This excludes the wild, hysterical, maniacal manifestations of ignorant religionists seen now chiefly at Southern and Western camp-meetings; it shows the inspiration of those who defend truth with the methods of the devil; it characterizes those

who sit in chief seats in Christian churches and nurse hate and plot mischief; it shows the motive of those who sell truth for money, and, from fear of high or low, keep back part of the message they were sent to deliver; it shows in their true light those who luxuriate in wealth and ease and grind the faces of the poor, forgetting that the image of God was never yet utterly worn from any man.

If, now, we turn to the positive side of the question, we find it easy to determine whether we are led from above, or not.

Christ said, "He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." If the teachings and work of Christ are becoming more real to us, if in him we are more and more seeing the One who, if we will follow, will lead to the true and right life; if we are more and more anxious to do his will; if we are led to devise loving and helpful things to those around us, then we are led by the Holy Spirit. But if we are inclined to "get even" with those who criticise or insult us, to speak unkindly, or to do anything dishonest or unfair, the Spirit is far away.

Christ said, "When he is come, he will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." When we are led to see our own lives as not only unsatisfactory but wrong; when we are followed by remorse because of having wasted powers which were given for use;

when there rises the fearfully real question, In what will all this end? we are under the influence of the Spirit of God. Some are troubled because they realize their imperfection and are dissatisfied when they stand in the light of what conscience requires and Christ teaches; but that is always a good sign. There is more hope for any other than for one who is satisfied. The first business of the Holy Spirit is to make a selfish, worldly, pleasure-loving soul uncomfortable; and while discomfort may be no sign of improvement, it is a sure sign that you are not forsaken of God.

Christ said, "He shall teach you all things." If with the years there comes a clearer perception of the possibilities of man, a fuller disclosure of what it means to be a child of God, a deeper insight into the purpose and plan of the creation, a truer appreciation of the fact that the millions who throng this planet must reach the heights of perfect manhood, even though it be by slow processes of growth, struggle, and conflict—then we may know that we are led by the Spirit; for we are being taught concerning those things to which the teaching of Christ pointed, but about which it did not clearly speak.

The Apostle Paul said, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." He did not say that all these graces will be found in each individual before it can be known that the

Spirit is there; but where any of them are, there the Spirit is, and where all are, there is a soul full of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The promise of Christ was that the Spirit should be with men and never leave them. The Spirit of God is everywhere that God is. Where is that? Let the Psalmist answer: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." Where is God? Here. Everywhere. How may I know that I am touched and guided by the Spirit? I cannot get away from God. How may I know whether he leads me? By asking and answering one question—Have I surrendered my will to him? If you have, you are led by him. If the consecration is only partial, you are trusting God for certain things and trusting yourself for others. The Spirit leads us just so far as we will let him. "But how may I know that he leads me in any given case?" Just as we know anything else. There is a train going east; if I get on I shall go in that direction. An hour passes. Do I know which way I have gone?

Let us now, for a moment, return to our text. When years had made sweeter and richer the experience of the man who was nearer to Jesus than any other, the Apostle John wrote to his

dear people at Ephesus these words: "The anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you." He was writing to men and women like ourselves. They had no more advantages than we have. They were surrounded by a peculiarly vicious civilization, in which there were more agencies of evil at work than now. And yet he said to them, You have the Holy Spirit in you, and do not need any human teacher. In these days, when we have turned away from the simplicity of the time in which those nearest to Christ could thus speak, and have substituted creeds and catechisms and standards almost without number, it is an inspiration to get back to the simple teaching of him who said, You need neither books, nor sermons, nor confessions—helpful as these may be; only one thing is essential, and that is that you keep your spirit wide open to the Spirit of God. We have largely lost confidence in the ability of God to lead his people and to do for them according to his own purposes. We feel that we must build fences and pile protections and make rules where the Apostle said, Ye have need of none of these things. You are in God's hands. Does God need the help of books and ceremonies and rituals and edicts?

I am persuaded that the chief peril of spiritual religion is, not novel views in theology, nor the inrush of a new philosophy which thinks of visible things as a growth rather than a mechanism; but

the danger is that men shall forget that God is as near to their spirits as the air to their bodies, and that the humblest child and the profoundest scholar are equally blind without him. This doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the present and ever-living Christ, not beyond the stars, but even in our hearts, making clear, in his own time and way, everything which it is needful for us to know—our Teacher, our Comforter, our Helper, our Advocate, our never-dying and never-leaving Friend, the only infallible Interpreter of the word of God—this is the truth which makes it possible for us to wait and work and rejoice. This it is which shall support us, “in the midst of time and twilight and midnight and sorrow,” until day dawns and the shadows flee away.



III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN WORK.



"Christ carries on the work of redemption to completion through the Holy Spirit whom he sends."—DR. I. A. DORNER.

"The real life of humanity becomes henceforth the life of the Spirit."—ELISHA MULFORD, LL.D.

"For whether thou bear a scepter or a sledge-hammer, art thou not alive; is not this thy brother alive? 'There is but one temple in the world,' says Novalis, 'and that temple is the body of man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hands on a human body.'"—THOMAS CARLYLE.

"The man most man, with tenderest human hands,
Works best for men, as God in Nazareth."

MRS. BROWNING.

III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN WORK.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

1 Cor. xii. 4.

THOSE who most truly realize the circumstances in which they are placed in this world are least inclined to dogmatize about the other world. In the midst of so much darkness, each little ray of light is welcomed. "We walk by faith, not by sight." About nothing are we more uncertain than about spirit. What is a spirit? How does it act? Has it form, or is it formless like the wind? Has it any power over matter? Can it lift weights and impel bodies, or can it move only on something like itself? Who ever saw a spirit? If one were to appear, would it be recognized? The unseen realm can be approached only by faith; the senses can neither prove nor disprove its existence. Perhaps the surest testimony to a spirit without us is the witness of our own spirits within. Deep answers to deep.

There are three stages in the development of our thought about these things. The first is that of childhood, in which the word of parents is not questioned. When told of an unseen

realm in which God and the Saviour are, childhood does not doubt. It has no evidence except the testimony of those whom it trusts. There is nothing more beautiful than such faith. Before long the child begins to ask questions. Who is God? Where is he? What is he like? What do you mean by spirit? Where are its days passed? How may a spirit be known? If these questions could be considered by themselves in the quiet of hours devoted to thought, answers would be more satisfactory. But the period of inquiry is coincident with that in which passion manifests itself, with the first thrills of ambition and desire, and to consider answers in the midst of such confusion and conflict is well-nigh impossible. But, whether possible or not, the moment a man begins to think, that moment the spirit within him which he does not understand begins its battle with the flesh. The knowledge which comes in answer to these questions is seldom readily attained. Now and then individuals are met who talk upon these subjects with easy confidence; but such persons, having only skimmed the surface of things, are never able to help those whose inquiries reach to the depths. Certainty concerning spiritual things is usually the result of struggle. The light dawns after a long night of mental darkness. Young people seldom have profound experiences. Consciousness of dependence comes only from consciousness of weakness,

from loss and sorrow and pain. I am not so much surprised at the imperfections of Christians as at the impatience of those who, if they know anything of spiritual things, know that knowledge and appreciation of them usually result from a long and painful process. A child learns the material world by coming in contact with it and being hurt by it. Not more easily are spiritual things learned. We are born babes into the new life. Sanctification is always a long way from the new birth. A man may be spiritually *growing* before he is very spiritual. Conversion is not the end, it is the beginning, of spiritual life. This introduction has been necessary to a proper treatment of our subject, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Work*.

We use the term "work" because it is the common one, but what we call work is only manifestation of life. Certain things inevitably follow certain other things. A man's conduct is as pure and beneficent as his character. If he never gives without grudging, if he hoards his money, if he is careful as to his interest but not anxious to send his dollars about doing good, there is only one conclusion: inside he is like the outside. If he is censorious and unkind and uncharitable, you might as well advise a lump of sand to put on the color of a rose, or a piece of iron to exhale the fragrance of mignonette, as to exhort him to do differently. He must first get a new heart. Christian work is always the fruit of

spiritual life. To attempt to induce men to be generous and helpful and self-sacrificing without first helping them into fellowship with the Spirit of God, would be as wise as to exhort a rock to produce oranges.

How men work, *with* the Spirit! The New Testament contains the record of those who were led by the Spirit, but gives no answer when we ask how the Spirit works. Turn to the biographies of inspired men like Clement, Augustine, Luther, and Edwards,—they are equally silent. The men were manifestly swayed by divine power, but the method of inspiration was unknown. Turn to the writers of the New Testament. Surely now our inquiry will be answered. But when we seek to find how these men did their work, the mystery is as deep as ever. We believe that they were chosen to preserve for future ages the words of the world's Teacher; but how they wrote, and the relation and proportion of the human and the divine in their compositions, has always been a subject of controversy. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is represented as co-operating with the human spirit in answer to prayer, as on the day of Pentecost. Sometimes he moves on men with sudden light, as in the case of Saul. The only way in which we can get an answer to our question is to study the analogies of nature,—God's manifestation of himself through matter.

How may we work with God in spiritual

matters? Just as we work with him in physical things. God is everywhere, and never absent; it is impossible to get away from him. When Christ promised the Comforter, he said that he would abide forever. It is proper to sing, "Come, Holy Spirit," if we remember that he never needs to "come." Consider also the power of choice; each individual can choose to work with God, or can refuse to do so. This is exactly what one sees in the physical sphere. Nature and her laws surround and never leave us; we may work with them or we may antagonize them. The soil, the sun, the rains, are, comparatively speaking, constant factors. If I want a harvest, all I have to do is to conform to nature. I plant potatoes and corn in soil suited to each, keep the garden free from weeds, protect it from animals, and then the sun and the rain bring harvests from those hard and apparently lifeless seeds. Nothing that the gardener could do would cause the potatoes and corn to reproduce themselves without light and moisture; and the light and moisture might have fallen on them for a whole century without causing them to grow, had not the intelligence and will of man properly planted them. The condition of a harvest is that the farmer shall cooperate with nature. Nature never changes her laws to suit the convenience or caprice of the individual. The rains fall, and the sun shines, and the seasons alternate without the slightest re-

gard for you or me. We can conform to them, and our little hands will seem to be doing what, after all, the elemental forces alone can do. Two gardens are side by side; the soil is the same; they are equally exposed to light and rain; the gardeners are equally skillful. One is full of flowers, and the other is a mass of matted weeds. One man worked with nature, conformed his will to her will in every respect; the other tried to be independent. Nature is always supreme. She can be used only by being obeyed. We can light and heat our houses with condensed sunbeams if we will bring the coal and the spark together. We can "hitch our wagon to the star" and make that do our bidding, if we will first conform to its laws. Obey nature and you can work with nature.

Apply exactly the same principle to the Divine Spirit: obey spirit and you can work with spirit. Conform to God's methods and he will work through you; oppose them and you will fall. The harvest of the Spirit is as natural as a harvest of wheat. There is a factory full of looms and spindles. Cotton is piled in masses on the floors; every wheel is idle, a thousand men are doing nothing. In a building outside, furnaces are blazing, engines are throbbing, everything seems active; and yet what is all that force doing? Nothing. The factory is silent, the men are idle, the engines and furnaces are useless, until there is connection completed be-

tween the two buildings. The belt is slipped on the shafts; movement begins, looms start, spindles fly, men are busy. So is it in spiritual things. Men do spiritual work naturally, inevitably, joyously, the moment they submit their wills to God. By submission of the will, the connection is completed between our spirits and God's. The power never fails, the ability to receive never ceases; but that power forces your will and mine no more than the sun forces a farmer to sow his wheat, or than an engine compels connection with the wheels and spindles in a factory.

Our question was, How do we work with the Spirit? Our answer is, By conforming to the laws of the Spirit: by obeying conscience, which is God's voice in the soul of man; by keeping our eyes and ears open, our hearts pure, and our minds inquiring, in order that the truth may reach us; by forcing our wills to be submissive and responsive to God's will, so far as revealed to us.

What are the usual manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power? God's Spirit always recognizes individuality. No person is ever inspired to do what he cannot do, although he is often moved to do what seems to him impossible. There is diversity of gifts. All music is not of man or bird, of wind instruments or elemental forces. The beauty of the universe is that of flowers and stars, mountains and lakes, cataracts and flaming

skies. A universe of roses or Niagaras would not be beautiful. Men are influenced according to their peculiarities. There is as much diversity manifested in spiritual activity as in physical nature. But through all the diversity of manifestation one purpose clearly runs. The Holy Spirit is God continuing, by personal contact with the human spirit, the work in which our Lord was engaged. That was the work of salvation and amelioration; the two with him were never separated. He came to save men from the guilt and the power of sin, and to help them to a better earthly life. If you will study his teachings and his acts, you will find that these are always blended. "The Son of man is come to save the lost." "He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." When we study his life we find him now saying, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more," and then opening the eyes of the blind, and curing women of their diseases. When he gave his disciples their commission, it was in these words: "As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." Christ brought good news for the whole life of man, and the Spirit continues that ministry, effectively using each person for the work which he is best fitted to do. John Wesley had spiritual fervor and gifts of execution and oratory; he became the leader of a reformation and the founder of the

most intensely evangelistic sect ever known among Protestants. Frederick Robertson, by sorrow and isolation, by great knowledge of the human heart in its struggles with invisible things, by wonderful purity of spirit combined with a mental honesty which nothing could daunt, was fitted to do what such men as Wesley and Whitefield—great and useful as they were—could not do; namely, show that Christianity had relation to the whole life of man. And God used that suffering minister as probably no other for a century, to commend his word to men of thought, men who, if they ever became Christians, must reach the goal by way of doubt and conflict. Wesley preached to thousands; Robertson preached in a little church that would seat only a few hundred, but he was so earnest, so honest, so able to show the reasonableness of Christianity, that his words have gone to the ends of the earth; and though he died before he was forty, it may be doubted if any man in our century has exerted so beneficent and inspiring an influence among thoughtful people. These men were preachers; but humanity has manifold needs. John Howard heard the shrieks of prisoners; his prison-reform was as truly in the line of the Spirit's work as any revival ever recorded. We forget that many live in circumstances which make the idea of God an absurdity to them. We have comfort; sorrows come, but blessings come also. We see our dear ones die, but we

can smooth their pillows and plant flowers on their graves. The heavens are not all brass. But suppose we lived as those prisoners did who had been incarcerated for life, for no crime but desiring freedom; suppose we had been separated from all loved ones, and condemned to live in filth, among vermin, in companionship with the vile, without ever having had the chance to prove our innocence, would it be so easy to believe in a just God? God raises up and inspires certain men as truly as he inspired Paul or John, and sends them out to so change the conditions in which men live that the idea of a better Power above may be credible. Mrs. Reaney's work in providing protection for London cabmen in storms, and that of Octavia Hill in reforming London tenements, are as directly in the line of the Spirit as Mr. Spurgeon's. It is well known that even Mr. Moody's meetings, the greatest since Wesley's, did not touch London's lowest life. One preaches; one teaches; one seeks to improve tenements; one works in the cause of temperance,—a better crusade than that to rescue the tomb of the Lord; one cares for homeless children; one tries to make convicts realize that they have not ceased to be men; one has a large family of children and no one to help in the training, and she simply devotes herself to her home; and one never able to do anything publicly tells, quietly and simply, from friend to friend, how God found him a sinner, hopeless

and useless, and has given him joy and peace. All these are impelled by one and the same Spirit, for all, in the way in which they can best work, are continuing the ministry of Him who went about doing good. Get rid of the idea that only those who do great things have the Spirit. Can you save any one from needless sorrow? Can you provide a home for one who has none? Can you send a little light into a life that seems all darkness? Can you take one man by the hand and walk with him and stay by him until the power of temptation is gone? Can you do nothing but make a bright and cheerful home for your fatherless family? Can you help two stubborn, selfish, unkind men to understand one another and to walk together in love? None of these are great things, but if any one of them is your work, then not Judson preaching in Burmah, nor Mackensie, the martyr of the Zambesi, nor Wesley leading in revivals which influence a nation, is more truly following in the footsteps of Christ, or is more surely inspired by the Spirit of God.

All who walk with God according to their ability and opportunity continue Christ's work as naturally and inevitably as flowers are made fragrant and harvests golden by the life that is in nature. We are not to wait for an impulse, to do anything: the Spirit illuminates rather than impels; and where a man sees any good thing that he can do, he needs no impulse to set him

at work. The fact that he sees it shows that the Spirit is with him. One thing always characterizes those who are in the Spirit: they strive honestly and at any cost—by humiliation, by shame, by confession of error, by sacrifice—so to live among their neighbors that all who know them shall see in them something of that Christ who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; who spent his days in doing for others and never asked any one to do anything for him; who prayed for those who were killing him, "Father, forgive!" The common work of the Spirit is to transform such selfish lives as yours and mine into such a divine life as Christ's.

But there are also unusual manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power. While we may not think of God as absent, it is equally unreasonable to doubt that he moves on single men, or on masses of men, for the accomplishment of great purposes. This was manifest on the Day of Pentecost. Certain individuals in history have been chosen for special work and clothed with exceptional power, as reforms and revivals have proved. In studying them, however, care must be taken to separate that which is really spiritual from that which is peculiar to the instrument. The roughness of Luther was not of the Spirit; a bold man was needed for the work. The hardness and bigotry of Calvin were not of the Spirit: all things considered, he was the best man for his work, notwithstanding his narrowness and hard-

ness. The extravagances of many revivals are not because the Spirit is present; just as many would have "the power" and go into convulsions if there were any other cause of excitement. From the beginning until now there has been this combination of physical and spiritual, and each individual has to decide for himself what, in a man or a movement, is of the Spirit and what of the imperfect agent. But after all allowances, certain incontestable facts remain.

The time came when the processes of deterioration and corruption in the Church of Rome could go no further without death. Then Luther was raised up and the Reformation began. I have been in the room in which that man was born, in the library where he first found the Bible, have stood on the spot where he burned the papal bull, have seen the doors on which he nailed his theses, have been in the very cell in which he translated the Word of God; and I tell you that no thought keeps pressing on a student of that marvelous life as does this: behind him, moving him, sustaining him, overruling his eccentricities, curbing his extravagances, and causing all things to work for good, was the divine Spirit who was the real power.

Such a period was the great awakening in New England under Jonathan Edwards, when the realities of the invisible world were presented to men with a power never surpassed. The preaching seems to us to have been one-sided and even

to have misrepresented God, but none the less is the hand of God visible, using those means, imperfect as they were, to make men realize that life is solemn and judgment certain. Such a period was the revival which swept over our whole nation after the panic of 1857, when the common subject of inquiry was concerning the salvation of the soul and the glorious power of Him who is invisible. Such a period is now in progress in the Scotch universities, where a man, not a clergyman but an African traveler, a Professor of Physical Science in Glasgow University, who seems full of the Spirit, has been the means of turning the hearts of university students toward the spiritual life as never before in the history of Scotland. To question the reality of such movements is to suspect history; to call them the results of machinery is to show ignorance of facts; to question whether God moves on individuals or on masses for the accomplishment of special benefits is to doubt whether he does what we see to have repeatedly taken place.

There is no law for the Spirit of God which man can formulate. This only is perfectly evident: all things are slowly but surely moving upward. As the waters are driven by the wind with mighty waves flowing backward and forward on the surface, while, down beneath, the great tide lifts steadily onward and upward the terrible confusion of waters, so the Spirit of God is silently, invisibly, but surely, lifting humanity toward the

divine. This separation of the Spirit's work in us and by us, into the common and uncommon, suggests two practical thoughts.

The unusual manifestations of the spirit are so entirely out of the range of human calculation that we are never to expect them, but always to be ready for them. We wait for God to do this work in his own time and way. Genuine revivals are never manufactured. We see what is done at such times, and imagine that this is all we need to do and the revival will come; we forget that the real power is unseen by us. It is always God's purpose to save individuals and uplift the world, but it is not always his purpose to use all for the same work. In unusual manifestations of the Spirit the initiative comes from above.

Yet, in the ordinary life of man the responsibility is always on the individual. The power never fails. It cannot be limited. You and I can and do have all of that power that we wish. If one is spiritual and another sensual, it is because one puts his will in God's hands, and the other keeps a large share of his in his own. Waiting for God to move you! Do you not know what is right? Waiting for God to make you generous and forgiving! Cannot you be so without special help from him? Waiting for a power to make you feel like praying! Do you not know that you need something? Why wait to be driven to asking? Waiting to have some one show you the truth! Have you not powers of your own which

you trust in everything else? Trust them now. None ought to expect impulsion from outside toward prayer, toward search for truth, toward obedience to conscience. The Spirit is not to be waited for; he is here. The power never compels; it always can be used. God is not needed to impel a man to do that which his natural powers tell him he ought to do. We might as well expect God to impel us to eat when hungry as to wait for him to impel us to pray when we feel our weakness. The responsibility rests on us.

Yesterday the earth was white and cold with its blanket of ice and snow. Everything was somber and gloomy. Even the snow-birds had hidden away from the rain, and the trees were lonely and sad. I looked on the cheerless desolation of winter, and attempted to trace the biography of rain-drops. They disappear from sight; but wherever they go, it will not be long before the sun finds them and reaches down gently and lifts them into the clear blue of the heavens, keeping them there until it has gathered others with them, and warmed them. And then it says to them, "You have been up here with me long enough, and now I want you to help me in my work of bringing beauty and gladness to the earth." And the drops come down again, and, as they fall, the sun shines on them and they answer with the colors of the rainbow which arches the land with its promise; and when they reach the earth they fill the mouths of thirsty lilies and grasses. By and

by the sun calls them back again, keeping them once more in the sky for a little while, and again and again sends them down to help in making other rainbows and to fill the goblets of other flowers. And so the great and splendid sun and the small, insignificant rain-drops keep working together, painting arches on clouds of blackness, drawing flowers from wintry graves, and satisfying their thirst with the water of life; and that process has gone on since the first rose blushed at the greeting of the sun, and will continue until the Sun of Righteousness shall be the everlasting light.

This old and always beautiful parable of nature is a fair analogy of man's life in the Spirit, except that to men are given powers of resistance. You and I fill no larger places in the universe than the rain-drops of yesterday's storm. We live a few days, and go out of sight; but the divine Spirit of love, which in all the ages is as beneficent and personal as Jesus Christ was, finds us, draws us out of our loneliness up into companionship with those whom he has made like himself, keeps us near him until we become like him, and then sends us on our ministry to those who seem to have sunk into everlasting night. One finds a lonely spirit, and becomes a companion; another finds a broken heart, and pours into it the oil of sympathy; another finds homeless children, and becomes their mother; another finds a young man in danger of sin, and takes him by the hand

and holds him until he is strong to resist ; another sees a great nation without knowledge of the Good Father, and hurries to it with the glad message ; another finds a lonely woman on the street ready to die, wraps around her the mantle of charity, takes her to her own home, and keeps her there until she has heart and courage to live. And so the work goes on, and those who by themselves were as insignificant as rain-drops on the ocean have become, no more useless and insignificant, but co-workers with the God of love—the Spirit of truth, for the hastening of the time when there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

My friends, this is your work, this is my work, this is what all may aid in doing if they will open their hearts to the Spirit of truth and love.

IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT A CONSTANT FACTOR IN THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS.

"Behind every drill which cuts the rock in the mountain tunnel, behind every engine which drives the ship against storm and tempest over the riotous fury of waves, or which propels the loaded trains over alkali plains and rocky crests, is this invisible force of the spirit which since the new religion came has expected a future to be wrought out by it, conformable to it, its ultimate crown of earthly glory."—R. S. STORRS, D.D.

"The maxim of the whole book [the Bible] is that God is the educator of . . . every people; that all circumstances are his instruments; that all events are assertions of his presence; that whatever happens to men is a means of showing to them his righteousness, and of molding them to his image."—F. D. MAURICE.

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew."

R. W. EMERSON.

"Thou dost ever teach the wise, and freely on them pour
The inspiration of Thy gifts, the gladness of Thy lore."

ST. HILDEGARDE.

IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT A CONSTANT FACTOR IN THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS.

“ And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

Gen. i. 2.

“ And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.”—*Rev. xxii. 17.*

THESE texts are from the beginning and the end of the Bible. The first shows God moving upon the face of inanimate nature; the second shows him calling his children at the end of all things. The first was before the earth had risen out of the waters or the stars been lighted in the firmament; the second is a glimpse of that time in which the history of the earth shall have melted into the splendors and solemnities of eternity.

The Holy Spirit did not first come after our Lord had died. He had been with Abraham and Moses and David and Isaiah, as he was afterward with John and Paul and Luther and Wesley. He had even inspired certain heathen, as the Bible clearly shows in the story of Melchisedec and the prophecy of Balaam. The Psalms were from God as truly as the Gospels. Our Lord did not say that when he left the earth he would send one who had never been here before; but he did say that when the visible Leader should

disappear, the invisible and spiritual Helper would carry on his work.

God's plans and methods are as distinctly traceable in the development of history as in the processes of nature or in the written Word. The "things which are made" clearly reveal God's method of operation; the Apostle Paul goes further and says "even his eternal power and divinity." In the gradual changes which have come over the earth from the periods of fire, of ice, of vegetation, of the appearance of animals, the student of nature finds sure evidence that the method of God is to move slowly, and out of imperfection and simple forms to bring splendor of completion and complexity of form. The world was not made as it is. It is not like a statue which an artist chisels, perfect at first; it is rather like a tree which was only a single point of green, and now is a trunk with a hundred branches and ten thousand fragrant blossoms. This nature teaches: God plants germs, and lets them grow through centuries, but the process is ever toward finer form and larger life. The revelation of God in history teaches the same lesson. The earliest records are of men less perfect than those living to-day; first that which is natural, then that which is spiritual; first the savage,—passionate, sensual, earthly,—and then the same being gradually led by much training and terrible discipline toward higher life. The story of the Exodus epitomizes the world's history.

History is a growth rather than a mechanism. The problem of progress is the process by which humanity is sloughing off that which is merely animal and temporal, and rising towards that which is spiritual and eternal; the Holy Spirit, a constant factor in that problem, is God always personally directing the process.

These facts are explicitly taught in the Scriptures. The kingdom of God is to fill the earth. The kingdom of God is the goal of progress. Everything is moving toward a condition in which the spiritual, the real man, will be independent of that which is physical, sensual, sinful. Paul speaks of the whole creation in travail-pains, and the real redemption will not be completed until the spiritual man is born,—released from the power of the animal. Believing that Christ has come to save individual sinners from the power and guilt of sin,—to free the spiritual nature from the control of the physical,—I find signs of the activity of God's Spirit where some see only genius or human sagacity. In all the progress of the ages the Spirit of God is moving upon the surface of humanity, as of old he moved upon the face of the waters. All life is under the touch of the Spirit, and all life is being lifted toward God. Limiting our inquiry for the purpose of definiteness, we observe that :

The Holy Spirit is constantly present, revealing and interpreting truth. Our Lord told his disciples that they could not understand all he

had said, and were not able to receive all he would like to teach; therefore he added: "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." That promise has been in process of fulfillment from that day to this. The disciples did not understand the Teacher; they thought he was to be a Jewish Cæsar. He planted in their hearts germs of truth which grew, but his earthly eyes did not see the harvest. The minds of men were filled with heathen religions and pagan philosophies. Heathenism was in the blood. Not easily are tendencies changed which have been growing through generations. The words of Christ fell on ears accustomed to phrases of rabbinical refinement, of Roman law, of Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. Naturally and inevitably the Jews interpreted Jesus as if he were a Jew, and the Gentiles as if he were a Gentile. Christ was preached among Romans, and those who dwelt in the Empire dreamed of a new State with Christ as Emperor. The truth of Christ was forced into their rock-ribbed theory of a nation; and as seeds growing in crevices sometimes split the rock, so it was impossible long to confine to the ideals of a single people that which was intended for the world. Yet, after a few centuries the Roman genius reasserted itself, and the Roman Church became only another form of the Roman State; Christ seemed

buried forever. But progress is by growth. The kingdom comes not with observation. The Spirit of God was at work; and in due time Luther arose, and the power of a corrupt hierarchy was broken. The theory of authority in religion, a relic of barbarism, received its death-blow. The fact that men are not judged by inexorable law, but that salvation is a free gift for all who believe in Christ and do their best to follow him, received its proper emphasis for the first time since Paul. It required more than a thousand years for the doctrine of justification by faith to be understood; but the time came at last.

After the Roman spell had been broken, a period of theological chaos intervened. Truth had to be re-stated and adjusted to a new environment. Calvin and Arminius appeared, one emphasizing the absolute will of God, and the other the free will of man. Each had truth, but neither was large enough to see the truth held by his brother. So the battle went on, but it was the kind of fight that the tree has with earth and storms: all the time the truth was growing. Jonathan Edwards was the successor of Calvin, and John Wesley of Arminius. Again two leaders had truth, but both had narrowness of vision. One emphasized divine sovereignty, and the other individual responsibility. Calvin and Arminius, Edwards and Wesley, did magnificent work; they were true apostles: they held, like

torches, truth which the world needed. But the Spirit of God was not confined to them. In a thousand homes and ten thousand hearts, by the sweet and tender ministrations of fatherhood and motherhood, God was bringing men to realize that, while his will was absolute and the will of man free, still, back of all theories and philosophies, one fact was throwing its radiance over the whole life of man,—that of the divine Fatherhood.

Christ said that the whole duty of man could be condensed into the two commandments of love; that God in eternity was revealed in himself, in spirit, purpose, and method. He said that men did not understand it then, but that the Spirit would interpret it unto them.

Has that promise been fulfilled? The race has been led to a spiritual interpretation of the teaching of Christ as fast as it was possible. Even now we have little more than a hint of the richness and love and helpfulness of his teaching, simply because our poor, untrained, conceited, prejudiced minds are only partially open. But how constantly the truth has grown! No more quibbling about whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, or only from the Son; no more inquisitions and burnings for those whose only crime is loyalty to conscience; hardly any more interpretation of the words of the divine Christ as if he were a magnified Russian Tsar. Certain great truths at last are luminous, sublime: the saving act, faith, which is only another

name for trust ; the one name for God used by Christ, "Father;" no great things to be done to win God's love ; the cross the symbol of everlasting love in voluntary sacrifice ; time, death, judgment, eternity, all in the hands of the Father, —under the guidance of the Spirit who never leaves, but daily leads to larger truth ! This is that to which the world has been led. Augustine was great and good, but when he died the Spirit did not cease moving on men. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Edwards, Maurice, Bushnell, were great and good, but the Spirit did not leave the world with them. And truth will not come into its final expression in your words or mine. I wish I could live a thousand years and see my Master with the light and glory in which the Spirit will reveal him then ; and see humanity when the truth that God is the Father of all, and that men are brethren, has had a thousand years more to influence human thought and life. And yet such longings are unnecessary, for the Spirit has already taught us that death cannot touch eternal life, and that those who have come to know God, even so dimly as you and I, shall, perhaps sooner than we dream, see him as he is.

Fatherhood and brotherhood, and between them One who is at once Father and Brother,—to this the slow centuries have come, through struggle and midnight and storm and fire, and revolutions in which nations were obliterated, and massacres in which whole churches perished.

The truth could not die ; it has grown, rent rocks of false philosophy and prejudice, risen out of martyrs' ashes and St. Bartholomew's massacres and Communistic carnivals of death. And still the Spirit is leading humanity onward and upward. In the progress of men in knowledge of truth—not "sacred" truth only but "all truth"—the Holy Spirit has been a constant factor ; and is ; and will be.

Progress in science and invention has been along lines which work for the general uplifting of humanity. Let us examine a few discoveries in their bearing on the spiritual progress of humanity.

The invention of gunpowder seems at first to have been in the interest of bloodshed ; but was it ? Before that time, fighting had been hand to hand. The influence of war on the individual then was more degrading ; for it requires more depravity to kill a man who can look into one's very eyes than to shoot at a distance with the knowledge that the bullet is likely to miss. The evil effect of war on the individual has probably been reduced one half by gunpowder. It was the first of a series of inventions, each more destructive than the one before it, until to-day war is almost impossible because the agencies of death have become so perfect that nations do not care to submit their population to extinction by dynamite and nitro-glycerine. Other wars will come, but each year makes them more improbable and more nearly impossible. I see no

reason to doubt that this discovery was under the inspiration of God for the purpose of hastening the time when war shall be no more.

Was not the invention of printing a part of the divine plan for the conversion of the world? The spread of Christianity was feeble and limited until that invention. Up to that time few people ever saw the Bible; it existed only in monasteries and occasional churches. There was not an average of one Bible for ten thousand professing Christians. The profound spiritual movement which was to pervade races was impossible until the mind of man could be brought face to face with the truth of God, until the individual could take that word with him into his closet and pray over it. Christianity follows knowledge of the truth. Now Bibles are everywhere. Missionaries are comparatively few, but one missionary can distribute a million Testaments, and each will become a helper in his work. Modern missions waited for the discovery of the printing-press. By that each man of power multiplies his influence a hundredfold. Not only Bibles, but truths which make epochs, unbind chains, make men discontented with bad conditions, and herald a better social order,—all depended upon the art of printing. The movement in society toward democracy and brotherhood waited for this invention. The rule of force was inevitable until, by reading, men learned that right was on the side of the many. No man ever lived more

essential to the world's conversion or more indispensable to the advancement of civilization than he who, by the invention of the printing-press, gave to each great thought a million tongues. Shall we say that he who utters truths which live and ennoble forever is "inspired," and that the man who makes it possible for the world to read those words is only a genius? Back of that apparently stupid Dutchman who seemed to stumble upon the greatest of inventions moved the Spirit of God.

Hardly less important was the discovery of the power of steam. In Birmingham, England, is still preserved the room in which Watt made his experiments; and everything in the room is just as he left it. Little did he dream of what he was doing. His invention opened the door into a new world. His hands have brought the islands and continents nearer together than the European States were before his time. His thought has winged vehicles which fly around the world with messages of love and of warning; with the old Bible translated into a hundred languages; with the missionaries of commerce and the cross. Do you suppose that these were not all included in the divine plan? Do you think that no one but that obscure mechanic had anything to do with a discovery which has caused the world to change front? Take these inventions, the printing-press and the steam-engine, and add to them the telegraph, and measure

their power for blessing. Criminals find no hiding-place, for the press exposes them. "The universe is built of glass" because newspapers exist. The Bible is literally in all lands and languages. Missionaries can go wherever they will. Newspapers carry sermons where ministers cannot preach. The telegraph warns of storms and pestilence. Distant nations have grown to be so near together that sympathy has become reality. Beneath the Southern Cross and in the Northern zones the same books are read, the same inspirations thrill, the same high hopes attract; and those who, if there had been only preachers to exhort, would still be as hostile as a thousand years ago, are now learning that all men are brethren, simply because they have come to know one another. Not even the writers of the Gospels were more directly under the guidance of the Spirit of God than were the inventors who have thus made possible and probable the day in which the brotherhood of man shall be a reality. Without them, it would have been practically impossible to obey our Lord's last command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

One other discovery deserves mention here: that of anæsthetics. Jesus Christ spent a large part of his ministry in relieving pain. In the *Apocalypse* no glimpse of heaven is more sublime than "There shall be no pain there." Groans of sickness, agonies of bruised and aching

bodies, terrors of hospitals and battlefields,—who can measure them? What a different world this was when there was nothing to alleviate pain! What a gloomy world it would be if all agents to deaden suffering were to be taken away! Can you doubt that it was a part of the divine plan to store in nature antidotes to suffering, and a part of the ministry of the Spirit of God to lead certain men to discover the places in which they were waiting for service? Blessed ministry! Broken limbs, aching heads, bleeding wounds, throbbing nerves, burning fevers, endless nights, mocking days! O, the horror of existence for those who inherit tendencies to disease for which they are not responsible, with no draught or lotion to deaden the agony! The discovery of anæsthetics was one of the greatest blessings which ever came to the human race.

If now some one asks, "Why were these discoveries delayed so long? Do you consider it a sign of the presence of the Spirit of God that they were withheld from hundreds of generations?" I have only one answer; it is this: Whether nature or history be studied, one fact is evident. All God's plans are accomplished by processes of growth. Why was there a glacial period to plow the earth with rivers of ice? Why was not the creation made perfect at once? No one can answer. God's way was the way of growth; and it was not in accordance with his

plan that these discoveries should be made before. The hour had not yet come.

But it is asked, "Why do you ascribe these things to the inspiration of the Spirit?" Because they are means by which the spiritual life is asserting its power over matter and the material forces. The invisible powers are used to heat our houses, draw our carriages, speed our messages, and print our pictures. The force of mind is greater than matter; and precisely because all these inventions are showing the supremacy of spirit do I believe them to have been inspirations of the great Spirit—the fountain of all force. A still clearer reason is found in the fact that all these inventions have a vital relation to the salvation of the world. They help to advance the work which our Lord came to accomplish; they make possible the preaching of the Gospel to all nations; they are promoting brotherhood; they alleviate pain; they are lifting the thoughts of men to higher things. They are helpers of Jesus Christ in saving the world.

For eighteen hundred years at least, the great movements of progress have been coincident with, if not dependent upon, great religious movements. The points of departure for all advancement during that period have been, by common consent, three. It is at least curious that those three are coincident with the three greatest religious crises of modern history.

There may be no significance in it, but it is

remarkable that the whole history of the world changes from the year that Jesus was born. The greatest nation of the world was at its culmination. As never before, men were in conditions to welcome a new religion. The old religions were dead. Superstitions from the Orient were sought by those who hungered for God and could not find him. Augustus had tried in vain to revive the old State religion. Never before had there been a common language in which a religion could be preached; but now Greek was the popular language of the world. Not until Rome built roads for her armies to the extremities of her empire would it have been possible for missionaries to carry the Gospel far beyond the hills and valleys of Palestine. But just when the religions of the known world ceased to have power, just when a common language provided a vehicle for the Gospel, just when Roman highways made its proclamation possible, then the Saviour was born and the new life of the world began. It may have been only a coincidence, but is it reasonable to think that the destinies of nations and ages hang on coincidences? Is it not more reasonable to see the fulfilment of a divine plan coming into the field of vision?

The next fact is that the Reformation and the Revival of Learning were simultaneous. For hundreds of years the human mind had been in chains; for hundreds of years reason and conscience had been fettered. The Greek and

Roman classics were unknown. The Bible was a sealed book. Suddenly, and at the same time, the whole horizon was illuminated. The classics were dragged from their hiding-places; art received an impetus which gave the world the most splendid masterpieces of the ages; and Luther, like a lion, dashed under his feet and destroyed the infamous claim of a corrupt church to rule men, body and soul. Martin Luther, Galileo, and Michael Angelo were very nearly contemporaries. For centuries the rock had been apparently crushing the seed: suddenly it flew in pieces; and the seed which had been growing in secret was the power which had broken it.

All recognize in the Reformation a great spiritual movement, but all do not see that the Revival of Learning was equally an inspiration of the Spirit. And yet the Revival of Learning had as vital a relation to the spread of the Gospel as the Reformation. It set men to separating the true from the false. The scientific spirit was born there; the critical spirit was born there. Luther asserted the duty of men to interpret the Word of God for themselves under the guidance of the Spirit. The Revival of Learning trained men to think; it was the beginning of the era of intelligence and diffusion of knowledge, of the critical study not only of the classical authors but also of the Bible, which has grown into the critical method of the nineteenth century. When the Reformation had declared man's independ-

ence, when the Bible had been unbound, when the printing-press had been discovered, then the corresponding mental movement made it possible for men to read and interpret the Bible intelligently. The Renaissance and the Reformation are two names for one great historical movement in which the Spirit of God is distinctly seen in his office of continuing the divine work of the ages.

Again, the settlement of the New World was coincident with the most remarkable spiritual movement since Luther. Each time the world is widened, the Spirit is seen going in to possess the land. The discovery of the New World fired ambition and cupidity in the Old. Adventurers were multiplied. Just at that time there was a class of people—intellectual and spiritual children of the Reformation and the Revival of Learning—who believed that God called them to do their own thinking and that he had trained them to think correctly, and who found no home in the land of their birth. They were of the stuff of which heroes are made. They feared God, but neither the elements nor man. Just when the New World was opened, these men—happened, shall we say? or were inspired of God? to be looking for a land in which they could be loyal to reason and conscience. Hither they came. The foundations of the nation were laid by men who had heads, and who believed in thinking for themselves; who had consciences, and who

believed that the voice of duty was God's voice ; who had iron in their blood, and who were ready for great things if called from above to do them. It was the children of these men who fought in the Revolution ; who would allow no peace until slavery was abolished ; who prayed under the haystack at Williamstown and began modern missions ; who have carried the open Bible and the common school from ocean to ocean.

It may have been only a coincidence that Jesus Christ came just when the whole world was without a religion and yet had one language and one State ; it may have been only a coincidence that the Reformation and Revival of Learning appeared in history hand in hand—the one freeing the conscience and unbinding the Bible, the other training the mind to think ; it may have been only a coincidence that when the New World was discovered, just then there should have been a company of men like the Pilgrims, saturated with the Bible and willing to die for it, ready to go in and possess the land : but I see in these facts more than coincidences. I see the movement of that Spirit of God who our Lord said should carry on the divine work and should abide with his people forever.

These three facts have been emphasized in this sermon : 1. Christ said that the spirit would make plain his teachings ; and never were the teachings of Christ so well understood as in our day.

2. Christ said : " And I, if I be lifted up, will draw

all men unto me." In order that this might be fulfilled, barriers of distance and enmity and language have gone down; the invention of gunpowder has made wars less frequent and will eventually make them impossible; the printing-press furnishes a means by which the Gospel may go to the ends of the earth; the steam-engine makes it possible to carry the printed word; while all these, with the discovery of anæsthetics and other elements of Christian civilization which we have not space to enumerate, have served to draw the nations together, to increase brotherhood, and to relieve pain. This is all in the line of Christ's working. The doing of these things makes it possible for him to draw all men unto himself.

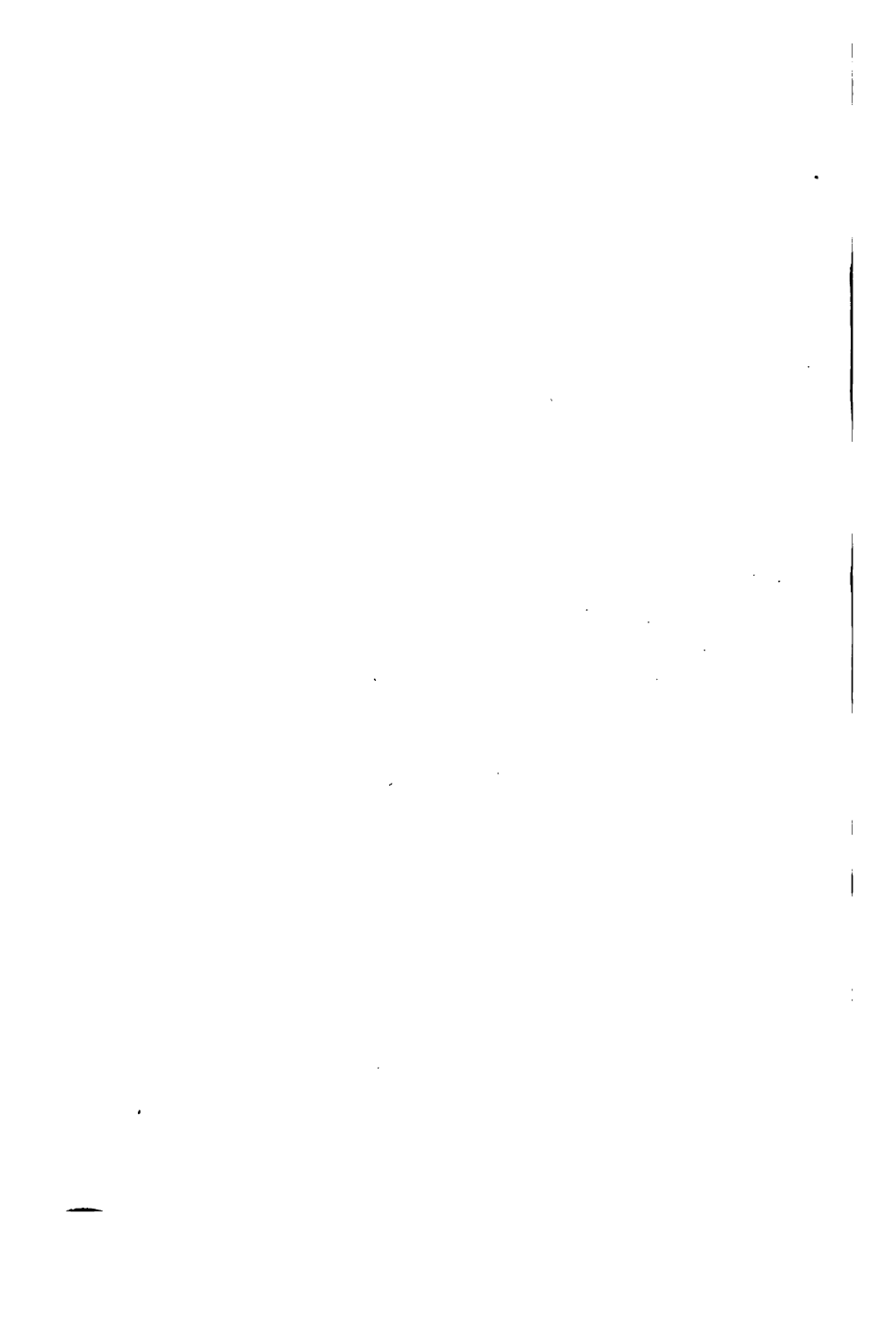
And, 3, we have seen that each advance in the world's civilization has been contemporaneous with a new manifestation of spiritual life, and that the civilizing process has been uniformly the vehicle for the manifestation of the spiritual purpose.

These three facts show clearly that, as individual life is always under the influence of the Spirit of God, so the same Spirit is carrying out his purposes in the development of history. You and I will not live to see it; but some time, probably—because of the continuance of this spiritual ministry—this earth of ours will be the abode of beings as much above those who are living now as we are above those who dwelt in prehistoric times. Our master lived in daily recog-

nition of and communion with the unseen and spiritual. His life is our true life. In comparison with that all earthly things are of little value; beside it the praise or condemnation of men is not to be considered. This is our hope, not that we are able to win that life, but that the one God—our Father, our Saviour, the Spirit who moves on our spirits—is drawing us upward, cutting one by one the bands which bind us to the earth, and filling us with that knowledge which is eternal life.

The time is short. The day is at hand. Let us lay aside every weight; let us remember that only the pure in heart shall see God; let us remember, also, that the promises concerning the Comforter were to those who had first accepted Christ as Saviour.

Who is the Christian man? He who obeys the Master's voice when he says, "Follow me," and who now, and throughout the ages of ages, submits himself to be led by the Spirit of Truth.



V.

CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT.

" But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and all the colors and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty divine and simple, and bringing into being and educating true creations of virtue and not idols only ?"—PLATO.

" The invisible spiritual world is not merely invisible for us, but is altogether imperceptible by means of the senses."

RICHARD ROTHE.

" If people, instead of seeking joyful experiences for themselves, would seek to make other people's experiences joyful ; instead of seeking to get rid of their own burdens, would seek to bear the burdens of others ; instead of examining whether they are in the true way, would seek to bring back to the fold of Christ those who have wandered from it,—they would find that doing good is the shortest road to being good."

H. W. BEECHER.

" Every duty we omit obscures some truth we should have known."—JOHN RUSKIN.

" O God, the pure alone,
E'en in their deep confessing,
Can see thee as their own,
And find the perfect blessing."

ANON.

V.

CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT.

“Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.”

Matt. v. 8.

THIS is one of the jewels of the New Testament. It is the opal of the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the poor in spirit;” “Blessed are they that mourn;” “Blessed are the meek;” “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness;” “Blessed are the merciful;” “Blessed are the pure in heart,”—this is the crown and climax. Here such a sight of God as is possible on the earth is mentioned among the blessed things, and its condition defined. Let that word “God” represent the whole sphere of spiritual truth. Then we may read the text, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see, or understand, spiritual things.” Purity of heart is one of the conditions of spiritual sight. Our subject is suggested by this Beatitude, although our study will not be confined to it.

What do we mean by spiritual sight? It will be difficult to define our meaning with precision, so we will illustrate. You and I talk about God. We ask, Is there, beyond these radiant fields,

starry skies, changing seasons, and dying multitudes of men, a Being who never changes and who can do all things according to his own will? That question may be answered in two ways. Any man can gather evidences of the existence of God. He sees that all the leaves are curved: strawberry leaves, maple leaves, apple leaves are curved. They grow on round stems, from rounded trunks of trees which together or in parts are variations of a circle. Nothing ever grows in squares or angles. Life always manifests itself in curves. From the dimple in a baby's cheek to the "Big Trees" that for three thousand years have faced the tempests of the Sierras; from the tiny bell of a lily-of-the-valley to the orbits of planets, comets, constellations, and galaxies, which in solemn silence sail in aerial seas, the line of beauty is the pathway of the universe. How happens it, but that everything comes from the One mind? Or, take that old saying of the philosophers, *Cogito, ergo sum*,—"I think, therefore I exist,"—and carry it on as philosophers do, and ask, Can an impersonal force produce an intelligent being? In this way you inquire how it is that the eye is adapted to light, the lungs to air; how all faculties are supplied with that which is necessary to the exercise of their functions. You are brought to the conclusion that design implies a designer. This is simply an intellectual process. It may be pursued by a villain, if he knows enough, as well

as by a saint ; the best head will gather the best facts : and, after all, minds will differ in results.

But there is knowledge of God different from that which comes by the process of reasoning. In a church of Hartford was an old colored wood-sawer. He knew no grammar ; he had never studied a book ; he could not even read. Yet, Dr. Bushnell says, when that old man opened his lips in prayer his language was worthy of Cicero. He believed in God as he believed in his own existence. The pagan slave Epictetus says, "If a person could be persuaded of this principle as he ought, that we are all originally descended from God, and that He is the Father of men and gods, I conceive he would never think of himself meanly or ignobly." That slave-philosopher, whose golden thoughts have been beaten out into a thousand modern books, had a clear conception of Deity, morality, and the relation between man and man. How did he get it? By study? No. In some strange way it was flashed in upon his mind. You may call it intuition, but intuition is too broad a word. Let us call it "spiritual sight." By that we mean that there is a knowledge of God, of obligation, an understanding of the claims of religious truth which is not and cannot be conveyed by study, and which comes only to those who are in a certain spiritual condition. This fact is based on the principle that only like can discern like. "When we are like him, we shall see him as he is." Only those

who are like God can see God. One understands instantly the meaning of sacrifice. Another laughs at it. The second cannot be convinced by argument. The first acts, not because he has passed through an intellectual process, but because of a spontaneous conviction of duty. Every one can talk of God; any one can make an argument to prove or disprove His existence. Only those who are like him realize his presence and feel the force of his claims.

What are the conditions of spiritual sight?

The first is Purity of heart. The secret of religion is locked from those who are not white-hearted. You may fashion syllogisms never so deftly; you may pack into industrious heads knowledge of all the sciences; you may occupy any position of responsibility or honor; still will you find written over the door of all spiritual attainment this variation of Plato's sentence: "No man can enter here who is not pure in heart." Not the clear-headed, the strong-willed, or the widely-read, but the pure, shall see God and understand his truth. What did our Lord mean by this utterance? The men whom he addressed were careful to have their sacrifices "healthy, sound, and clean, and whole." To them he said, in effect, "You are careful about the animals you offer on the altars: be careful about your hearts." Ordinarily, purity means freedom from filth. Purity is in character what transparency is in the crystal. "It is water flowing

unmixed and clear from the mountain spring. Or it is the white of snow. Or it is the clear open heaven through which the sparkling stars appear. Or it is the pure light itself in which they shine. A pure character is that in mind, and feeling, and spirit of life which all these clear untarnished symbols of nature image, in their lower and merely sensible sphere, to our outward eye." *

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," is a prayer for the realization of this beatitude.

Moral purity is an indispensable condition of spiritual sight. Sensuality dims the senses. It blackens the glass through which the soul should look to eternal realities. A mind filled with images of evil, through whose silent halls foul and bat-like imaginations fly to and fro, whose thought is not of the everlasting whiteness of God but of what will quickest feed the lusts, can no more understand spiritual things than a worm can understand the splendor of Dante's song. This is simple and plain. Every one knows what it is to have a white heart. There have been certain prominent men who have presumed to lead the world of thought, and to speak with authority concerning religious things, who should no more be trusted as guides than should blind men as pilots. This rules out of the category of religious teachers all such men as Goethe, and

* Bushnell's "Sermons for the New Life," p. 264.

that sweetest and saddest of singers, Robert Burns, and that strange combination of mind and imbecility whom the world knows as Voltaire. Goethe was a *roué*. The warmest friends of Burns gladly draw a veil over the delinquencies of his moral life. Voltaire was one of the vilest as he was one of the ablest of mankind. "Too late I loved thee, O thou Beauty of Ancient Days," cried Augustine after an early life of sensuality had blunted the fineness of his spiritual perceptions. "I would give ten years of my life if I could forget the pictures which a youth of wrongdoing has hung in memory," said one of our most eminent educators. Impurity grows in the mind which harbors it as rottenness grows in an apple. One such imagination is a seed from which a hundred fouler imaginations spring. There is no place for a high standard of thought or life in such a man. He may become nominally religious, he may develop a theological bias and make systems with ease, but he will never be spiritually sensitive. The impure cannot appreciate the delicacy of purity. There are lines in it which they never see. If they cannot appreciate purity in man, how can they enter into communion with the infinitely pure God? A man with dirt in his eyes cannot see the splendor of the stars; and it is equally impossible for him, with foulness in his heart, to see the radiant whiteness of God or of God's truth.

Sincerity is a second condition of spiritual sight.

Without it there will be spiritual blindness. We are rocked in a sea of mystery, with darkness before us, behind us, around us. What things are real? Beyond the blackness is there personality? Does death end all? How shall we walk without sight? These are terribly real questions facing every earnest man, and their answers are disclosed only to the sincere. Other things may be trifled with, but truth must be approached reverently and with honesty. If you and I expect to be led by the Holy Spirit, we must cease to rely on human leadership. What will this man say? What will that council or assembly of ministers say? What will those persons on whom I am dependent for my daily bread say? These questions must be ignored by those who expect the guidance of God's Spirit. Without any recognition of the right of another to interpose his opinion, without regard to the authority of any name, however great, he who expects spiritual guidance must see to it that all foulness is kept from his mind, and that with perfect sincerity he seeks those things which are from above. It is difficult to be perfectly sincere. Other motives are clamorous. But the great ones whose souls have been opened to truth as the ocean surface to light, have always been those who have dared consequences and followed the inner illumination. In our churches, occasionally, much is done to prevent a man from being led by the Spirit. He is bound to a creedal statement which, in nine

cases out of ten, no man, at the commencement of his life, understands.

We shall some time cease saying, Believe this, and believe that. We shall rather seek to keep men sensitive to the Spirit, as the glass in the camera is sensitive to the light, and then trust the Holy One to lead his own whithersoever he will. Sincerity, freedom from guile, independence of human opinions and motives—these must characterize those who would have that deep conviction of the reality of God and the eternal life which holds a man with all the force of reality. I would rather die for an error which I believed to be true, as Giordano Bruno did, than to sit on a throne and profess what other men call truth, with my heart condemning my voice.


The third condition of spiritual sight is Obedience. This condition is announced by Christ in the words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." It may be said this is begging the question. How can I obey One in whose existence I do not believe, or, at least, of which I am not certain? The question is fair, and yet our position is consistent. We assume nothing that all do not grant. Obedience. Obedience to what? To the light which each one has. Every one has some idea of what is right and what wrong. You may have no clear conception of God or the future life. Very well! Stop thinking about those things. In what do you believe? That justice is right? Then seek

to be absolutely just. That purity is right? Then strive so to live that your heart shall be like the driven snow. That it is right to be kind and faithful in domestic relations? Then live to that; and if that is all the creed you have, at least be consistent with it. The only way to receive spiritual light is to commence by honoring the light already possessed. Perform the present duty. Emphasize the present belief. Better do ~~wrong~~ in trying to do right than to make no attempt. Carlyle says, "Most true is it, as a wise man teaches us, that 'Doubt of any sort cannot be removed but by action.' On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: 'Do the duty which lies nearest thee,' which thou knowest to be a duty! The second duty will already have become clearer." Obedience is the only way by which many of the profoundest lessons can be learned. "Love your enemies, bless them which curse you," said the Master. Is the lesson learned when the words are committed? No, it is not learned until, following in the footsteps of the Master, you and I have put it into practice. "Love your enemies." What does that mean? You cannot know so long as there is one person to whom you are unwilling to go as Christ comes to you. How am I to learn forgiveness? By forgiving those who have in-

jured me. How am I to learn what the Atonement means? By studying the philosophy of it, and calling it "governmental," or "expiatory," or "moral influence," or what not? No. To do that, and that only, is to know no more of the sublimity of its meaning than the child who dips her hand in the sea can know of the teeming life and measureless spaces of ocean depths. To understand the meaning of Christ's sacrifice, we must sacrifice. I am willing to say that no man knows what the Atonement means until, in the likeness of Christ, he has given himself for those who have nothing to give in return. Go to the one person toward whom you have most reason to feel unkindly—a person who has lied about you, insulted you, betrayed you, and violated every claim upon your care and regard. To that person go, speak to him kindly, treat him as if he were your own brother, and keep on doing that until he is conquered or you are dead, and then you will know something of what the Atonement means. The Christian doctrine of sacrifice can be understood only by obedience to its demands. Obedience is essential to an understanding of spiritual truth,—nay, essential even to the reception of it.

Not far from the Rhine stands the grandest of modern temples. Massive walls, graceful pillars, forests of arches which seem to have been caught from some primeval forest, hideous gargoyles, flying buttresses, windows red as blood and golden

as light, angel-choir, solemn nave, and lofty spires that seem to reach the sky,—a poem in stone, rises the cathedral of Cologne, beside that grand old river. But it is not so grand as the work of Pastor Fliedner in the humble little town of Kaiserswerth, almost within its shadows, where is one of those rare institutions which give faith in God and hope for man. A humble clergyman and wife, when their people could no longer support them, went to England for help. There they met Elizabeth Fry and went with her into the English prisons. Their hearts were touched with the altar-coal which had fired her heart. They returned to Germany. Now mark the growth. They were young. They knew little of life and nothing of philosophy. They commenced to do for the first who needed help. Two outcast women, released from prison, could find no home. They were taken by Pastor Fliedner to his house. Obedience brought new revelations of the meaning of service. The sphere of activity grew,—until now their training-school for nurses, their mission-house, their orphan and insane asylums have become stars whose radiance meets around the world. Obedience is the condition of knowledge. Kindness, justice, purity, charity, are right always and everywhere. For one, I have no faith in the spiritual illumination of any man, though his head contain the brains of Bacon, or his place in the church be that of preacher or pope, who has not learned that he



must be kind, pure, just, and charitable. If a man is not obedient to the knowledge which he has, he can never have trustworthy revelations of higher knowledge. If a bad man tells you he believes in God, you wish he would act it more and talk it less; in short, you do not believe in knowledge not manifested in deeds.

Another condition is Self-surrender. Spiritual sight concerns itself with things outside of us, most of them invisible to the physical sight. You cannot see the stars by looking at your hands. You cannot appreciate the beautiful in conduct or character by wondering whether the world is giving you your dues. No one is less to be trusted in spiritual things than the egotist. He knows all there is to know already. He is receptive of nothing from heaven above or earth beneath. Centered in himself, how can he hold the windows of his soul open? The selfish man, always more anxious to receive all that belongs to him and to gain all that he can than to be generous, never having a good word for others for fear that some one else will get more attention than himself, always looking out for slights, and fancying them where they are never intended—such a man may have good qualities, but he can never receive special spiritual illumination. The generous soul is the open soul. Hence, while great leaders have usually been egotists, as Bacon in philosophy, Dr. Johnson in literature, and Napoleon in the movement of nations, the

great spiritual teachers have been self-forgetful. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," cried the Apostle Paul. Sakya Muni, the Buddha, who has made the religion for a third of the human race, left the splendor of a royal court, spent his days where he could feel the beating and the breaking of human hearts, gave himself to find a way of escape from the "ever-changing wheel of nature and of pain." The Orient, which has followed Buddha, has been led in a faith of purest morals by one who, though he never heard of Jesus, walked the same pathway of self-denying service for his fellow-men. And our great Master! What words describe him, the world's supreme moral Teacher and spiritual Instructor, like these: "He made himself of no reputation; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"? All who would receive light from God must follow in his footsteps. Man is but an atom in the universe, not its center. But the selfish man will make dogmatic statements about God and eternity, as if the Almighty were in the habit of consulting him concerning the management of the universe. He is not to be trusted. Close by his side, hardly daring to look up, is one who makes no pretensions, who realizes that an individual is to the universe less than a drop of water to the sea, but in whose quiet hours have come visions of truth, duty, and the possi-

bility of goodness of which the former never dreamed. To such God manifests himself.

He may reveal truth to a man who knows nothing of books, as he did to Job ; to one who is no philosopher, as he did to the Apostle John ; but he never reveals spiritual things to those who are impure, insincere, careless of duty, or selfish. I do not underrate knowledge and culture. A wise man who is pure in heart is better than if he were ignorant. But I want to record my belief that many who have no time for study, whose lives are lives of drudgery and pain, of whom the world never hears, have visions of God and the mystery of his service of which the masses are ignorant.

Purity, sincerity, obedience, self-surrender,—these are the marble steps that lead to the spiritual temple.

Three lessons naturally follow.

If what has been said is true, then the best teacher of spiritual truth, other things being equal, is the purest and truest man. Even a man who seldom opens a book, if we can imagine him to be purer in heart than they, is a better guide for spiritual things than Jonathan Edwards with all his theology, Professor Huxley with all his scientific acumen, Neander with all his historic research, or Herbert Spencer with all the powers of his philosophic mind. Not learning, but goodness, is the world's best teacher. This is not the world's way of looking at it. Innocence is almost

synonymous with weakness. Queen Caroline with a diamond wrote on the window of her palace, "Lord, make others great, keep me innocent." The world's best teacher of its profoundest mysteries is the world's purest man. This is not the place to discuss the question of the relation of science and religion. It is enough to say that when Tyndall, Huxley, or Mivart speak of physical science, it is time for you and me to listen; they are princes in their own realm. But I do want to emphasize the fact that because some one is learned in other things he is not therefore to be trusted as a religious guide. The scientist has no right to a feather's weight of influence in religion because he is a scientist. The Christian knows no more about the origin of the world, or the laws that govern it, because he is a Christian, than if he were not a Christian. The Beatitude needs angelic emphasis: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Newton may instruct in science, Niebuhr in history, Hamilton in philosophy, Beethoven in music, Angelo in art, Calvin in theology; but these things are not spiritual truth, and it is the pure in heart who see God and know spiritual truth. Tennyson's lines on the dwellers in the spirit-realm may be applied to such truths:

"How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

" In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except like them thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

" They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

" But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within."

There came to my study a few years ago a man without work and not able to work, with a large family of his own, and a blind father dependent on him. I asked him his name. He gave it. I asked him how to spell it. "Well," said he, "to be honest with you, I have never been to school a day in my life. I have always had to work early and late, and I don't know how to spell." It was no fault of his. Into such hearts comes longing for God as real as yours or mine. They bury their dead with tears as sincere as ours. The tremendous reality of the future they face with inquiry as eager as ours. It is not of the rich, the wise, the strong, the successful; not of those who can say with Whittier,

" I listen to the Sybil's chant,
The voice of priest and hierophant;
I know what Indian Kreesna saith,
And what of life and what of death

"The demon taught to Socrates,
And what, beneath his garden trees
Slow-pacing with a dream-like tread,
The solemn-thoughted Plato said; . . ."

nay, it is not written of any of these, but of the pure in heart, that They shall see God. Therefore the poorest, the weakest, the humblest man that walks the earth may enter into communion with the Deity.

Professor Tyndall, after almost superhuman exertions, climbed the Matterhorn, and, standing upon the summit, where few have stood or ever will stand, his mind ran back to the beginning of creation, back to the star-dust out of which he imagines all things to have been evolved, and he asks, "Did that formless fog contain, potentially, the sadness with which I regard the Matterhorn? Does the thought which now runs back to it simply return to its primeval home? Such are the questions, without replies, which run through consciousness during a ten minutes' halt upon the weathered spire of the Matterhorn." Questions equally mysterious meet us everywhere. We live, as birds and beasts and insects live, —to die. We put our thoughts into buildings, books, machines; and the buildings stand, the books are read, the machines run on, when we are formless dust. We reach eternity with aspiration, and grasp only the facts of an hour. O my friends, let us be honest with ourselves! Let us covet the best gifts. Let us not shut

our eyes to facts, even though we understand them not. We walk between graves. Stars shine on when men are gone. We love, and love's chains are broken as rudely as any others. We are made for happiness; and yet Augustine's words are true, "God hath had one Son without sin, but never one without sorrow." Every heart sometimes drops blood; and when we ask, Does no one see? Can no one help?—the waters ripple, the stars shine, the trees whisper, the great world "spins down the grooves of change," and no answer comes from any of them. Who can know anything of what every one longs to know? Only to those who are pure, sincere, obedient to the light they have, unselfish, comes the divine voice of the Divine Teacher. Then how may we become pure, sincere, obedient, unselfish? Almost in a word can we answer: Become a disciple of the only pure One who ever walked this earth.

Spirit inspires spirit. Would you become brave? Read Plutarch, and the dauntless heroism of those warriors of the elder ages will fire your soul with their fervor. Would you be a philanthropist? Study the splendid self-sacrifice of Howard and Pastor Harms; fall in love with Florence Nightingale treading the ghastly wards at Scutari, while bleeding soldiers kiss her shadow as if an angel had passed: their example will become your inspiration. Would you be pure in heart, sincere as light, obedient and self-sac-

rificing? Then study the words, imitate the example, fall in love with the person, and spend all the time you possibly can in the presence, of Him who is the Brightness of the Father's glory; and as roses and violets absorb their colors from the sun, so you will become white with the radiance of Christ's purity, and in his light the mysteries of earth shall melt into the changeless realities of the Better Land.

VI.

THE THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF OUR
TIME.

"The theologian must be guided by the same rules in the collection of facts as govern the man of science. . . . An imperfect induction of facts led men for ages to believe that the sun moved round the earth, and that the earth was an extended plain. In theology, a partial induction of particulars has led to like serious errors."—CHARLES HODGE, D.D.

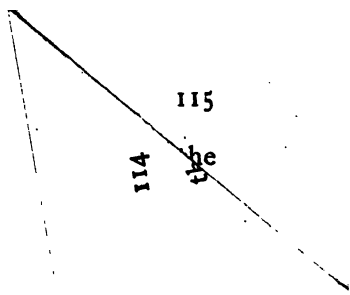
"Truth will always seem deeper, broader, higher, the nearer we approach it; the more we converse with the eternal, the less we dream of comprehending it."—F. D. MAURICE.

"Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect
He could not, what he knows now, know at first;
What he considers that he knows to-day,
Come but to-morrow he will find misknown;
Getting increase of knowledge, since he learns
Because he lives, which is to be a man."

ROBERT BROWNING.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the
suns."

TENNYSON.



VI.

THE THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF OUR TIME.

“Watchman, what of the night?”—*Isaiah* xxi. 11.

OUR age bristles with interrogation-points. That is a good sign. Where there is no anxiety about belief there is little care about life. Inquiry is the first step toward faith. Never before was there so large a proportion of undaunted searchers for truth. Their eyes are open. There are no ominous clouds in the whole horizon of thought, and yet many fear that the foundations of religion are being undermined and that the world is fast swinging toward skepticism. The apprehension results from confusing inquiry with doubt. Recognizing the essential connection between theory and character, we will consider some of the conclusions reached in recent years through reverent study of the problems of religion. Our purpose is not controversial. Simply and impartially let us seek to answer the question of the text: “What of the night?”

Each age will have its own solution of the eternal problems and its own interpretation of

SPIRIT AND LIFE.

the eternal truth. No one can any more think for another than he can breathe for another. Each individual decides duty and destiny for himself. Each is compelled to stand on his own feet and to think with his own brain. The thought and expression of one age are never identical with those of a preceding age. The thought of an age will be composed of the diverse and divergent thoughts of its individual members. It will have in it something peculiar to each. Forms of expression and theories about the contents of religion are, therefore, variable. It is so in all spheres of investigation. Truth does not change; the facts on which religion rests are immutable: but the point of observation is never twice the same. Astronomy has been many times rewritten. One astronomer will tell you that the heat of the sun is caused by concussion of meteoric bodies falling on its surface, and another, that it is caused by the shrinking of the sun's mass. Once the sun was supposed to move around the earth, and again, the earth was supposed to be flat. Books which point to the Pleiades as the central constellation of the universe and to the star Alcyone as the center of that constellation, are not yet obsolete; but modern astronomy declares to be fancy the theory of a central sun around which the whole creation swings. Stars and suns are not affected by theories concerning them: and no more are the facts of religion,—such as sin, salvation, God, and eternity,—affected by at-

tempts of individuals to bring them within the field of their spiritual telescopes.

No age can formulate its thought in what shall be a formula for all ages. Men who lived one hundred or five hundred years ago were limited like ourselves. They faced the same mysteries and studied the same revelations. Each generation will think according to the peculiarities of its general life. It will differ from other ages in its statement of religious truth as it differs from them in its interpretation of scientific or philosophical truth. God has given a revelation of his nature and of his will. About that revelation, in the man Christ Jesus and in the words of the Bible, there have been differences from the first and there will be to the end. Different minds see different things everywhere. There is a spiritual as well as a physical color-blindness. Heredity determines the mental bias. Men usually see as they were born to see. One finds nothing but doctrine in the Bible: he lives on the first eight chapters of Romans; apparently he never thinks of the Sermon on the Mount or the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Another is impressed by the stern and lofty ethical standard of the Bible: he never lingers over the fifth of Romans or the first chapters of Ephesians, and declares that Paul spends double the time in teaching morality that he does in stating doctrine. Some think they cannot understand a word of the Bible except through cate-

chism glasses. What shall we say? That the Bible can be made to mean anything, and therefore means nothing? Is not the truer conclusion this: that no individual is large enough to see all that there is in the Bible, any more than all there is in nature? What each sees is true, and yet the truth itself is greater than a thousand million fractions of humanity, who always emphasize that which harmonizes with their nature and their prejudices. The Bible has been studied for hundreds of years. Criticism has grown to a science. Interpretation has become the life-work of consecrated scholars. We look to other days and long for vanished wisdom and piety. Distance lends enchantment to the view in this sphere as in all others. Men appear larger-brained and more spiritual as they grow distant. Probably the members of the Evangelical Alliance of 1873 surpassed, for ability, scholarship, and charity, any council of the early church. These two considerations—(1) that each age, in all spheres, seeks to express facts according to its own knowledge and ways of thinking, and (2) that revelation is something which demands study and can be understood only as the result of a process of thought by persons of different capacities and prejudice—show that the religious outlook is never so discouraging as when there is no interest manifest in the consideration of the fundamental problems of religion, which are always the fundamental problems of life.

I have thus spoken by way of preface to an enumeration of certain conclusions of religious thought in our time. Emphasis has been put on these facts because the process of re-adjustment which is going on in all churches and in almost all thoughtful minds, by which the thought and knowledge of the nineteenth century is seeking to harmonize discovered reality with revealed truth, is a sign of spiritual vitality rather than of the decadence of Christianity. It means what the reformation under Luther meant; what the reformation under Calvin meant; what the trial of Jonathan Edwards for heresy meant,—namely, that men are busy now, as they always have been and always will be, in trying to harmonize the truth of revelation with the facts of life and the moral intuitions, so that there shall be no conflict between God in the human soul and God in the written word.

The most conspicuous fact in current religious thought is the supremacy of Jesus Christ. The center of the religious thought of fifty years ago in New England was the divine decrees. Until recently the emphasis was placed on the sovereignty of God rather than on the revelation of God in Christ. The question as to which was right and which wrong cannot be decided by a show of hands. It is enough to know that both are truths of importance. Now, as never before, Christian thought centers in the person and work of our Lord. All study about God, man, and

eternity must begin and end in Jesus Christ. There are few writers of any standing in theological circles who do not insist that the very heart of their systems is: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also." Jesus Christ, the personal self-revelation of God; Jesus Christ, the revelation, in terms of humanity, of the everlasting Father; Jesus Christ, the One by whom all claims to revelation are to be tested; Jesus Christ, the soul and center of Christianity in his work as Teacher, as Example, and as Sacrifice,—this is the luminous and growing characteristic of religious thought. Philosophies about Christ are losing ground. Practical humanity clutches facts and throws theories overboard. Men realize their own impotence and their guilt. Earth's wails and agonies are never hushed. The only voice which has ever spoken peace to this raging sea is that of the Man of the New Testament. Slowly but surely the world has come to see that what it needs is some One to forgive its sins, to inspire it with hope, to relieve its misery, to touch its dead bodies with life. The One who has done this is being accepted as never before. Without invidious reflection it can be affirmed that the Unitarian movement is not spreading. It has influenced contemporary thought immeasurably; but its noblest leaders are becoming more and more evidently devoted to Christ. At a recent meeting of the Summer School of Christian Philosophy the venerable Dr. Peabody, of Cam-

bridge, spoke most touchingly of our Lord as "the God-man." The wonderful chaplet has not yet faded which William H. Channing, in a letter to Mr. Frothingham, of New York, laid at the foot of the cross after having searched the arid deserts of speculation in vain for something to satisfy his soul. These are the words of his confession: "Once again I sought comfort with the blessed company of sages and saints of the Orient and Hellas—with Lao-Tszee and Kung-Fu-Tszee; with the writers of the Bhagava-Geeta and the Dhamma-Bada; of the hymns of ancient Avesta and the modern sayings and songs of the Sufis; with radiant Plato and heroic Epictetus, etc., etc. Once more they refreshed and re-inspired me as of old. But they did something better. Hand in hand they brought me up to the white marble steps, and the crystal baptismal font, and the bread and wine-crowned communion table—ay! to the cross in the chancel of the Christian temple—and, as they laid their hands in benediction on my head, they whispered: 'Here is your real home. We have been but your guides in the desert to lead you to fellowship with the Father and the Son in the spirit of holy humanity. Peace be with you.' And so, my brother, once again, and with a purer, profounder, and tenderer love than ever, like a little child, I kissed the blood-stained feet and hands and sides of the hero of Calvary, and laid my head on the knees of the gentlest of martyrs, and was uplifted by

the embracing arms of the gracious Elder Brother, and in the kiss of mingled pity and pardon found the peace I sought, and became a Christian *in experience*, as through a long life I had hoped and prayed to be. Depend upon it, dear Frothingham, there is on this small earth-ball no reality more real than this central communion with God in Christ, of which the saints of all ages in the church universal bear witness." The writer of these wonderful words is a type of the religious thought of our time. It is not swinging away from Christ; it is centering in him. He is the inspiration of charity and philanthropy. His simple utterances are already the watchwords of hastening revolutions. Even writers like Henry George acknowledge that their discoveries in political economy are only getting back to the simplicity of the Teacher of Nazareth. Renan closes his *Life of Christ* with words in which are blended the music of poetry and the judgment of history. "But whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

In theology, in literature, in the newspapers, and, most of all, in the great missionary and charitable movements which glorify this century, are seen the pre-eminence of Christ. Infidelity

attacks the Bible and the Church, but bows with uncovered head before our Master. It acknowledges that, more than any teacher who has ever lived, he has helped humanity in its movement toward divinity. The whole religious world unites in confessing its faith in these words:

“O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.”

The second conclusion of religious thought in our time is that God is to be interpreted by his Fatherhood. I will illustrate my meaning. There have been, among others, three ways of thinking about God. He has been considered a lofty and glorious King. Passages of Scripture speaking of the grandeur and majesty of the Deity have been emphasized. In religion, everything is colored by the conception of God. When the kingly idea was most prominent, God was regarded as kings have been. Great, glorious, awful, to be approached only on bended knee; doing his own will without care for the puny creatures beneath him. But when this conception prevailed, human life was dismal and hopeless, and it was hard to preach from such texts as: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden.” Interpret God and his relations to humanity by his majesty and you have a religion of awe and dread,—a faith which will com-

pel humility but will stimulate neither aspiration nor love.

Another way of thinking of him has been as the Head of a government analogous to human government. What follows? A governor can have no heart. He must be holy and just. Every law must be impartially executed. If he has any sympathy with offenders, he must not show it. Art has pictured justice as a blind figure holding balances. So God has been represented: unable to see, and consequently without danger of favoritism; simple, exact, inexorable, meting reward and penalty according to the demands of government. This is correct as far as it goes, but it is a partial representation. Everything is arranged with a view to the greatest good of the greatest number. But the idea of God as that of a Supreme Governor—how cold and distant and official! Preach only this, and who will believe that “the bruised reed he will not break”? Go through the world with this message: That God is a Governor; that he considers not the happiness of individuals; that his first anxiety is that all the wheels of government move smoothly, that the good be protected from the bad. What then? There will be a conception which may compel obedience but which will awaken no enthusiasm and attract no love. Think of God as a lofty and glorious King, interpreting him by his kingliness, and the next thought will be,—if, as the heavens are higher than the earth, he is

more lofty, more unapproachable, than an earthly king, then what does he care for me? Prayer will lose its delights, communion will become only form, and the universe will be a palace illuminated with suns and systems, but not a home.

One age has thought of God as King, another as moral Governor, but the characteristic of this age is that God is being interpreted by his Fatherhood. "Our Father which art in heaven" is the first prayer of childhood and the last prayer of the departing spirit. This age starts with that word "Father" as a torch, and carries it into all the dark places of life and speculation. It says to the theologians: Logic is good and consistency desirable, but we will believe no doctrine and tolerate no theories which contradict the Fatherhood of God. Your doctrine of the Atonement must recognize that the One to be propitiated is the Father of all, rather than King or Governor. Your doctrine of human responsibility must recognize that the frailties of our humanity and our inheritances of evil do not add condemnation. Your doctrine of punishment, in this world and in all worlds, must tolerate no picture of an angry God holding his child over infernal flames. In our Father's house there may be punishment and it may be lasting, but it can never be vengeful, nor cruel, nor arbitrary.

In literature and philosophy, pessimism is always found where faith in the Fatherhood of God

is wanting. Perhaps the sublimest utterance of Stoicism is this from Epictetus: "Who, then, is unconquerable? He whom the inevitable cannot overcome." But how hopeless it is! Man is like a rock in a tempest, that is all. "The Light of Asia" presents in form of exquisite music the saddest, dreariest philosophy that ever assumed the garb of religion. Almost its first note is this: "And life is woe." What is the end of the book? "The dew-drop slips into the shining sea": he is happiest who ceases to exist. There is a school of modern writers reaching back to Byron and Shelley, and including George Eliot, William Morris, Rossetti, and such philosophers as Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, whose philosophy of life might almost be condensed as follows: "Life is not worth living. Love and death are the only realities." George Eliot's characters seem to live in a universe of wheels within wheels in which the grist is the bodies and souls of men; and remorselessly and forever they roll. In her pages the cold philosophy of Huxley finds literary expression: "Nature never overlooks a mistake nor makes the slightest allowance for ignorance." The contrast between George Eliot and Mrs. Browning is like that between night and day. There is no hope for those who know no Fatherhood. Do not these words of "Shakespeare's daughter" belong among the inspired utterances of humanity?

"And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—

'Round our restlessness, his rest."

Interpret God by his Fatherhood. The universe is in the leashes of love. "The crowds with broken hearts, silent griefs, and agonies unutterable—is there nothing better for them?" He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. "Those masses of little children packed in tenements in hot midsummer weather, how can they live decently? Is not something wrong?" Not a hair of their heads can fall to the ground without the Father. "But so many are sick; there is such terrible pain; some are never well." Yes! and underneath all are the Everlasting Arms. "But, O, if it were not for death! These terrible separations! And then, do you know that a great part of the world die from no disease but broken hearts?" Yes, but in our Father's house are many mansions.

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

This age, as no previous one, interprets God by his Fatherhood.

Naturally, from the foregoing follows the fact that ideas concerning the nature of penalty are not the same as they have been in other periods of history. There is a distinction between the nature and the duration of penalty. At this

time we pass current discussion on the doctrine of the duration of punishment, only calling attention to the fact that it is the subject of serious and reverent inquiry in all evangelical denominations. To refuse to recognize that the whole doctrine of life after death is being re-examined, and with more care than ever before, is to ignore that which is self-evident.

This age does not think as many other ages have thought concerning the nature of penalty. It will be better to illustrate. Is punishment of sin natural, or arbitrary? Is it self-inflicting, or is it inflicted by the direct action of the Almighty? Suppose a man has a field of corn which he divides into two parts. One part he gives to one boy for cultivation, and the other to another. To the first he says: "You must keep steadily at work; if you do not, I shall whip you." The boy works faithfully for a while, but by and by grows careless, cuts the corn, and spoils the crop. The farmer calls him, shows him what he has done, and whips him. This is arbitrary punishment. Does it do any good? That depends on the boy. To the other he says: "You shall have the field to cultivate; all that you raise shall be yours. You are old enough to take care of yourself. If you cultivate this field properly, you will have a good living. Understand that the responsibility is yours. If you do well, you will have enough; if you neglect things, you will go hungry. You must take the

consequences." The boy does neglect, and reaps no harvest because he was idle when he should have worked. After a while he comes to the farmer and says: "I am hungry." The reply is: "Did you not have a chance to earn a living?" "Yes." "Why didn't you?" "I—I—didn't work." "Yes—and now you must go hungry." This illustrates the natural penalty of sin. It is as much the ordering of God as the other, but it is self-inflicting. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Science has immensely enlarged the boundaries of our thought. What is science? The study of God's methods of operation. It makes fearfully true that cry of the Psalmist: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" God is in nature; he is in life; he is in what we call laws; he has arranged things so that wrong-doing is always followed by misery. Emerson says: "There is no den in the wide world in which to hide a rogue." Violation of law, which is sin, is followed by suffering; and violation of one law is as truly sin as violation of another,—violation of a law of the body is as truly sin as swearing or stealing. Both laws are from God. How universal is the fact of retribution! How has it been so long neglected? Over-eating causes indigestion:—sin followed by its penalty. The man yielding to passion becomes more passionate and disagreeable:—sin followed by its penalty. A lie; and no one trusts the liar:—sin followed by its penalty. A lecherous

private life clean on the outside, resulting in a mind fit for swine to revel in, full of all uncleanness:—sin followed by its penalty. A man neglects the plumbing of his house and dies of diphtheria:—sin followed by its penalty. No one escapes. Nature is rigorous, she cannot be cheated. Rob her of sleep, and she will set your nerves quivering and stamp deep lines on your face.

When we come to the doctrine of future punishment it is evident that God condemns no one in any arbitrary sense. This is the plan of the universe. Any man may choose evil, if he will, as the prodigal took his goods and went into a far country. If he chooses to live with thieves and harlots forever, in spite of the entreaties of friends and the ministries of home, whose hand shuts the door, his Father's or his own? Penalty self-inflicting; no one able to escape it except by the grace of God in Jesus Christ; the law, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," running through the universe,—this is one of the conclusions which the Christian church of this age may be said to have reached, as the age of Athanasius formulated the doctrine of the Trinity.

A further characteristic of the religious thought of our time is a return to the doctrine of Christ that his Spirit is to abide in his disciples, leading them into all truth. St. John wrote to his disciples: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One

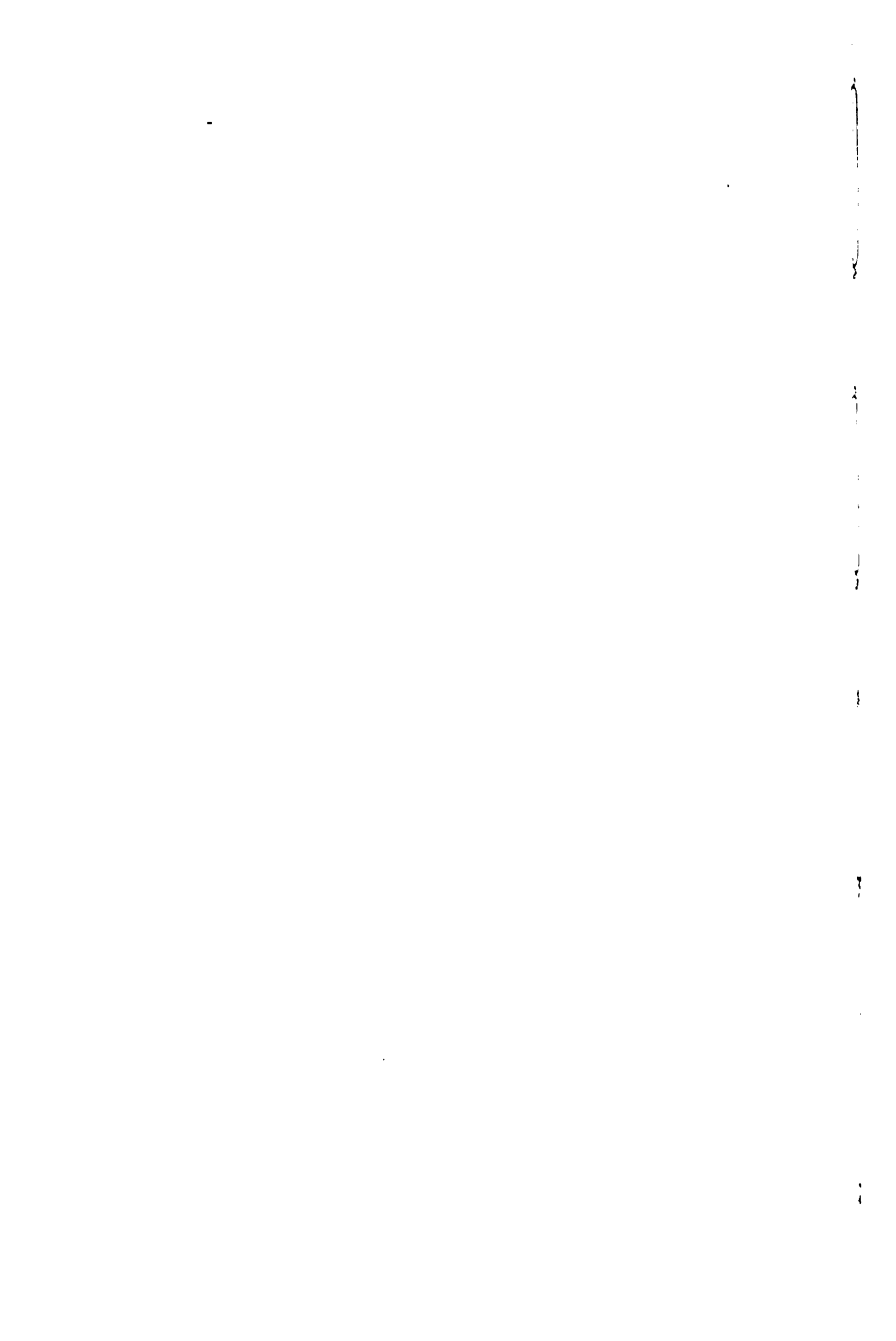
and need not that any man should teach you." This was the final doctrine of our Lord. "I go away, but He who shall come after me shall abide with you." Into hearts pure, obedient, and loving God himself comes; and humble men—fishermen and mechanics; humble women; housekeepers busy with work; mothers burdened with responsibility—have become angels of God. A tent-maker became the leader of the world's thought. A frail woman went to the Crimea as nurse, and, single-handed, changed the hospital systems of the whole world. "I am going away, but I will come again," said our Lord, "in the Spirit whom I will send." Slowly the church is advancing toward appreciation of that sublime teaching. Each follower of Jesus becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. In some mysterious way God lives, by his Spirit, in the spirits of those who give him entrance. Here we catch sight of a truth ineffably glorious. There is danger of deception and arrogance, of mistaking egotism for spirituality; but our Lord's words were to his disciples, and more and more the world is coming to realize that power to uplift, power to discern truth, power to inspire holy enthusiasm, is in proportion to the fullness with which is grasped the fact that every Christian heart is a temple at whose altar and in whose pulpit the Spirit of God forever abides. This is the doctrine which, more than any other, is changing the thought of our century. It puts

terrible solemnity into the fact of responsibility, saying to all: "If you are not led by the Spirit of God, it is because you are so selfish and impure that the Spirit cannot dwell in you."

It has seemed best thus to speak of the religious thought of our time because thought touches life at every point. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Our study has been of the characteristics of Christian thought; with theories of doubt we have had nothing to do, speaking only of positive things. On the whole the outlook is encouraging. Standards of life are everywhere rising; everywhere there is discontent with error and oppression. Socialism and Nihilism are only exaggerations of a legitimate demand for liberty and justice. Infidelity is neither so aggressive nor insidious as a century ago. The thing to be most dreaded is intellectual stagnation, absorption of thought in business and pleasure. It will be bad for the world when men cease to inquire concerning the fundamentals of the Christian faith; for then, unless all are perfect, they will cease to care for truth. Jesus Christ leads the world's religious thought: God is interrupted by his Fatherhood: suffering is seen to follow wrong-doing everywhere: and men are beginning to realize that even the humblest may become temples of the God of eternity.

These interpretations of truth are, probably, not final. The next generation will read Provi-

dence and the Bible in its own light. We find no truth which conflicts with the facts our fathers studied. Let us expect that those who come after us will think and formulate for themselves; only let us not forget that God and human need never change, and that, until redemption is complete, human bodies weary with work, human hearts broken with grief and burdened with guilt will not cease to find the music of these words the sweetest sounds in the chaos and confusion of earth: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."



VII.
THE INCARNATION.

"We must either live without religion, without God, and without hope in the world, or receive the mystery of the Incarnation. . . . Without incarnation, a religion is impossible."
—ALEXANDER VINET.

"The idea of the perfect religion requires that of divine Incarnation, this being the consummation of revelation and humanity. The world is created for perfection. In the God-man this is given. Therefore is the God-man destined for the world by God's love, and through Him the perfect religion becomes reality."—Dr. I. A. DORNER.

"Should His coming be delayed a while,
See if, for every finger of thy hands,
There be not found, that day the world shall end,
Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word
That he will grow incorporate with all,
Can a mere man do this ?
Yet Christ saith, this he lived and died to do.
Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,
Or lost !"

ROBERT BROWNING.

VII.

THE INCARNATION.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”

2 Cor. v. 19.

THE doctrine of God is an endless study. It is fundamental, and yet it is impossible to dogmatize about it without presumption and impertinence. The subject is so vast that men may seem to hold views nearly antagonistic, which yet are only opposite sides of the same measureless truth. Yet it is more practical than the Golden Rule or than the Ten Commandments, for it gives them both their sanction. Character is always the reflex of the idea of God. Nobility, purity, and moral earnestness attend high and spiritual conceptions of the Deity: sensuality, selfishness, and fatalism walk hand in hand with unworthy thoughts of him.

These two apparently contradictory facts face us in our inquiry into this mysterious theme: (1) The doctrine is the most important about which men can think; on their ideas of God depend all their theories of life, duty, and motive for work: and yet (2), it is a subject that can never be understood and about which only the

most indefinite ideas can be formulated. But these facts contradict each other only in appearance. The Scripture says that "clouds and darkness are round about Him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." It is not necessary that an object should be understood in order to be practical. The indistinct is always more impressive than the definite. We are sure that no object can be very great when such beings as we can perfectly understand it. We are awed and silenced by the things which cannot be comprehended. In the Scripture teaching of God he is spoken of only in symbols, and his power is made evident before his love. Before he is revealed as Father, he is the Creator who calls chaos into order. Fatherhood, when applied to Deity, gains significance from the vast indistinctness in which the Creator is hidden. Job acknowledged this truth in magnificent words: "I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained. Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."* This follows that matchless series of questions which had been put to Job giving hints of the glory and majesty of the Almighty: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Hast thou

* Job xlii. 2, 3.

entered into the springs of the sea? Where is the way to the dawning of light?" The power of God is impressed by hints and symbols; and these are always poor things when compared with the truths they are used to illustrate.

The first point to be noted as to the incarnation of Deity in human form is that it was to have been expected. The presumptions are all in its favor. Almost all religions have taught that in some way God or the gods have been incarnate in the interests of humanity. This gives no reason for concluding that therefore all professed incarnations are false, but it rather indicates that what has been so long and widely anticipated will some time be realized. The Greek doctrine of incarnation, the Hindoo, the Egyptian, and the rude beliefs among less cultivated people, all point toward the reasonable probability of that well-nigh universal faith. Furthermore, if the Being whom we call God has any existence, it is probable that he would in some way make himself known to his creatures. It is necessary to our idea of God that love be the governing motive in his being. Certainly all will acknowledge that they believe in the goodness and love of God, even though they find it difficult to believe in the divinity of Jesus. Is it possible to think of a God of love with power to make himself known to his creatures who are endowed with ability to receive revelations from him, but who yet leaves them without the knowledge of himself which most

they need? The Deism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the coldest, most unreasonable, and most unfruitful faith ever held by intelligent men. It taught that God existed, but that there was no relation and no communication between himself and his universe. He was outside and above it, and cared no more for it than an architect for a house which he has designed, or a watchmaker for a watch which he has regulated and sent away forever.

In our study of this subject we begin with a consideration of certain facts in experience which are almost, if not quite, universal.

Thoughtful men are constantly reaching out for knowledge,—such as can come only from above, which cannot be found by searching. We want to know whether there is a Being above us on whom we are dependent. We are dissatisfied with the best knowledge that man can give. Knowing our own ignorance, we have no confidence in those who are but little wiser than ourselves.

We crave sympathy,—such as our fellow-mortals cannot give. When the best they have has been offered, there are depths in our souls that are not touched. That indescribable and inappeasable hunger is a prophecy, some time to be fulfilled.

We long for some one to silence the voice of remorse. It is impossible to exaggerate the constancy or awfulness of the misery caused by being at enmity with the universe. A man says:

"I am wrong, and the air palpitates with voices charging me with guilt, and I long for some one to do for me what I cannot do for myself"; and that longing follows as pitilessly as our shadows.

The terrible mystery of death faces us everywhere. We live, we love, we get ready to be happy, and the scythe of the Dark Angel cuts our fairest at a breath, and we go on desolate, waiting for our turn to fall. Why do men study? Why are they ambitious? Why do they seek wealth or power, when the end is so near at hand? These are the oldest questions; but they are also the newest.

Now, these longings are facts: they are nearer to us and more real than houses and lands; they never go away, but gather intensity with the years. Each person who thinks at all presents the spectacle of a being eagerly, constantly, and spontaneously reaching up toward some One whom he instinctively feels must be, but whom he cannot find; of a solitary, lonely heart crying for companionship which men cannot give; of a discordant being out of harmony with the universe, appealing—consciously or unconsciously—to some One able to put him into right relations with it; of a vital, rational being endowed with capacity for endless growth and with cravings for immortality, reaching out aspirations and longings, like antennæ, into the darkness. Is it probable that these questionings were intended

never to be answered? I cannot believe it. My friends, as one who has knocked long and earnestly at the door of the unknown, who has felt the weight of these terrible mysteries until they have seemed no longer endurable, I say to you that the most unreasonable thing in the world is to imagine that these universal longings of humanity can go forever unsatisfied. The longing is for that which can be realized only by a divine Person; and therefore, before I open my Bible and before I catch a single note of the music of the gospel of love, I am convinced that the only reasonable thing for an intelligent man to believe is that the same Being who implanted these aspirations and capacities has planned also to satisfy them. Therefore it is that I say an incarnation was to have been expected.

Having then established this presumption, we consider certain thoughts concerning the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus, the Christ. Should the objection be raised that what has been said points toward *an* incarnation, but not toward the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, the reply is, If Jesus Christ is not God's answer to the aspirations of humanity, then they have no answer. Then you and I are

"Children crying in the night,
And with no language but a cry."

What is the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation? I shall make no attempt to speak with

precision on this subject, simply because it is impossible. What the Bible never once attempts to express it is not likely men will ever be able satisfactorily to define. And the Bible never once defines the Incarnation or the Atonement. There is apparently the most sublime disregard as to whether they are understood or not. Paul speaks of "God manifest in the flesh"; but when we ask, How manifest? we have no reply. He says: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" but when we put our question again, How was God in Christ? there is no answer. All any one can do under such circumstances is to explain the mystery to himself as well as he can, remembering that what helps one may only hinder another.

To me, the Incarnation means that the limitless, omnipresent Deity in some unknown way manifested himself through a human body; that he united himself to humanity for the purpose of redeeming it. This is not saying that he usually sits on a throne in far-away halls, and that when he came to earth the throne was vacant: he was as much as ever on the throne when our Lord was on the earth. God is everywhere,—but this is not saying that he is everywhere manifest. He is everywhere, but we do not see him. If we ever see him so as to know and be influenced by him, he must adapt himself to our capacity and our condition. If you try to teach a child astronomy, you use words the child can under-

stand ; and so, if men are ever taught of God, it must be in ways they can comprehend. That is, Deity must come into human form and use human language ; and therefore St. Paul speaks of him as " manifest in the flesh."

Dr. A. A. Hodge, in his Theological Lectures, has expressed the idea in what he calls " The parable of light." " Let it, then, be marked that light in its essence is absolutely invisible and passes all apprehension. . . . Light makes manifest all things from which it is radiated or upon which it is reflected, but is itself utterly invisible and unknown. Thus it is with God the Father. Through infinite time he fills infinite space, and he is the abyss from which all things flow and into which all things tend ; yet no man hath or can see God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

" Light itself makes all things visible on which it falls and from which it is reflected, but it becomes itself visible only in a radiant point or disk, like that of the insufferable sun from which it floods the world. Suppose some angel or other inhabitant of an outlying province of creation, who had often heard of the wonders and splendors of light, though he had never seen them,—suppose him to wander far afield through the nether darkness in search of this hitherto unseen wonder. If such an one suddenly should rise beyond the crest of some eclipsing shadow,

and without transition stand face to face with our central sun, would he not with rapt wonder naturally hail the sun with language similar to that used in Scripture to express the essential relation of the eternal Word to God?—‘All hail! thou art the very light I seek; thou art the word of light, its uttered form; thou art its express image in which this visible source of all life and knowledge may be beheld; thou art the radiancy of its inexhaustible glory. All its fullness dwells in thee bodily.’ Thus God the Father is never known except as he is seen in the person of the Son.”*

The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, but it can manifest him. He has come into manifestation in a human form once, and, so far as we know, only once; and all we know of God, except his power and wisdom in creation, we see in Jesus Christ. Thus God was everywhere the same as before, but was expressed or manifest in humanity only at one place. By this illustration we see how we can speak of God as in a man and as, at the same time, everywhere.

We read, “The Word was made flesh.” It was “in the beginning.” “Beginning,”—when was it? Where was it? “Beginning,”—before the earth had been gathered from chaos, and while the air was yet unfanned by angel’s wing. “Beginning,”—that which stands for something

* pp. 133-134.


inexpressible. In that beginning the Word was; and the Word was with God. And then the climax: "The Word was God." "The Word." There has been but one opinion, so far as I know, concerning this Scripture. Word means the expression of something. A word is a thought expressing itself; and the thought does not exist before the word. We think in words. With us, as truly as with God, the word exists in the beginning. It is the nature of God to manifest himself. He has made such revelation in different ways; so far as we know he has manifested himself but once in the flesh. If now you say: This does not help me to understand the mystery, I reply, Probably not. The Scripture is vague, and purposely so. Our Master expressly says that this is a subject which cannot be understood. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him." That is, God may be known by revelation. But what will you say to the following?—"No man knoweth the Son save the Father." God may be known and man may be known; but how the two become one is not the subject of revelation. What God has closed let not man try to open. There is mystery here, of course. There is mystery about the color of a rose. The light fills space. It wraps systems and constellations in splendor. It is a luminous ocean in which worlds sail. And yet the light comes into a little room in your house and searches out a

tiny flower, which could not by searching find it, and makes it more beautiful than anything man ever made. The mystery in the one case is as great as in the other. When you tell me how the light which palpitates from the sun paints the colors of that lonely rose, I will tell you how God, who is everywhere, comes into one Man and so truly lives in him that it is right to say that when we see him we see God.

By the Incarnation, then, I mean this,—the Infinite, Eternal, and only God in his own way manifesting himself in and through a Man, so that the two are one, and yet God is everywhere as before.

You ask me if God has manifested himself in other worlds. I answer, I do not know; but if there are beings there who need him, without doubt he has gone to them in such a way as he knew to be best, simply because he is Father. But one more question: Will he ever manifest himself again on earth? If love requires it, he will. But the second manifestation will be when God shall be in the whole human race as he was before in Jesus of Nazareth, and all humanity shall be the final incarnation of Divinity.

The Incarnation was the fulfillment of an eternal purpose. The union of God with man was no sudden expedient made necessary by human sin. With all reverence it may be said that there would have been an incarnation if there had been no sin. It was a necessity to the



nature of God. Shall we say that God would give to those who had violated his laws and refused his love an ineffably more glorious manifestation of himself than to those who had been always faithful? Do parents give their best gifts to the children who neglect their wishes and disobey their commands? There are depths of fatherhood and motherhood never fathomed by those who leave the circles of love in which they have been reared; and there is a richness and splendor in the revelation of God to those who have not sinned which you and I cannot appreciate.

But is there any passage of Scripture which authorizes the speaking of the manifestation of God as determined before the creation? In the Apocalypse is one which speaks of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." If there were no other, this would be enough. The Incarnation was part of the purpose of God as truly as the Creation. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The Lamb is the symbol of love; and "the Lamb slain," of love reaching to death. What does all this mean except that the manifestation of God in sacrifice was part of his eternal purpose? In the spiritual world, as in the physical, all is ordered by infinite wisdom. There is no chance. God was not surprised by the sin of man. Whatever is, was foreseen. The world was not left to be filled with misery and wickedness while the

Creator slept, afterward awaking to find that the Evil One had gotten the better of him. He knew that possession of freedom carried possibility of its misuse. He knew that there would be sin, and provided to meet it before it existed. If it had not existed, God would have been the same and his richest gift would not have been withheld.

The Word which was made flesh was in the beginning with God, and was God. God always has been and always will be the same as in the manifestation on the cross. By the Incarnation the past is to be interpreted. We read of the slow development of humanity from conditions almost bestial; of wars in which neither sex nor age was regarded; of moral corruption which words fail to express; we read of worship which was a crime, like that at Corinth; we see the remnants and ruins of conditions miserable beyond description; we read of whole continents from which had apparently disappeared the knowledge of God and appreciation of virtue, and there seems to be some terrible mockery and injustice on the throne of the universe. What must child-life have been when all the streams of heritage were polluted and there were no ideals above pleasure and profit! What must mature life have been when all motives to morality were thrown down! On souls deeply sensitive the knowledge of these things rests like mountains. And what has been the result of a study of his-

tory? Where it has been without faith in God as Father, it has led to hopelessness and despair. But our doctrine teaches that God had never forgotten the world. He was not the Friend of a few egotistical and quarrelsome Hebrews, and the Enemy of all others. He has always been what Jesus Christ was on the earth. Jesus dying on the cross to save publicans and harlots, Roman soldiers, and heathen philosophers, was all anticipated when the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world." The Atonement expressed God's eternal nature. The nations whose ruins, buried by the dust of centuries, are just coming to light in Mexico, in Central America, in Asia, were all in the hands of Him who in the fullness of time assumed a human form, *not to begin*, but to *carry on*, a work which was begun before the morning stars sang together. "God so loved the world that he sent his Son." The fathers and mothers who have had their children torn from their arms by death, little children with jubilant life and throbbing anticipations, have not seen them cast as rubbish to the void. He who took little children in his arms and blessed them was in the beginning with God and was God. Jesus with the little ones was a manifestation of the Love that had been ever since birth and death began.

The Advent was the beginning of the manifestation of God in humanity: but that manifestation was nothing sudden and unconsidered; it

was not a change of nature ; it was the fulfillment of a purpose whose formation is hidden in eternity. Throughout all past ages men have been, and throughout all future ages will be, in the hands that were pierced, the blessed hands of him who prayed : " Father, forgive," who was in the beginning with God, and was God.

The Incarnation is a prophecy of the final state of humanity. The Advent points both toward the past and the future, toward what has been and what is to be. In Him we behold what the race is some time to become. For this our Master prayed that last night in his intercessory prayer : " And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them ; that they may be one even as we are one ; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." God in Christ and Christ in his followers—humanity and God in one,—this is the prophecy. What does it mean? That in Jesus Christ is seen the ideal which will be finally realized in the race. To-day nations are armed to the teeth, millions of men are awaiting orders ; and the possible bloodshed, the tears, broken hearts, ruined homes, and misery like an ocean are because of human selfishness. Given a real Christian on the throne of the Tsars, another in Vienna, another in Berlin, and another in Paris, and these millions of men would be disarmed in a day and sent among the peaceful and productive industries. Four men with Christ in their hearts in the places of power would make war

impossible. And such men will some time be in the places of power. The story of the sorrows and suffering of the working-women is a terrible one. Whatever the remedy may be, the fact is that thousands of women are living with starvation staring them in the face and the terrible alternative before them, starve or sin. It is easy for those who have enough to say, "Such things need not be;" but they are, and they are in part kept so by men who with one hand rob them, and with the other give to charity from what they steal. When all are like Jesus Christ, no law of competition will be allowed to separate the children of God from one another. When all are like him, it will be no longer possible to say: "There was never so much money idle, never so much food unused, and never so many starving people in the land." All the world like Jesus! Each man going about to do good; no men living double lives; no women by their selfishness and pride driving to wickedness those whom they ought to help; no cruelty; no one to fawn and smile and secretly stab; no harsh judgments; no unkind words; each one willing to pray concerning the mistakes of his brother—if we can imagine mistakes in such a world—"Father, forgive them." Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you," and in him we see the perfected race. Think of it. No war; no tramp, tramp, tramp of millions to kill one another; no clanking of chains on plantations or in prisons; no divided families; no

professing Christians treating one another like heathens; no crushing monopolies; no scandal-mongers; no busy-bodies; none growing rich at the expense of the welfare of their brethren; all bearing each other's burdens, hiding each other's faults, helping each other in their weakness, doing as they would be done by, looking unto Him who is invisible as to the dearest and kindest and best of all friends, and "trusting Him whate'er betide." The response to all this will be perhaps: "A beautiful dream!" It is not a dream. It is the prophecy of the Incarnation. This and more must be when all men are one with Jesus Christ as he is one with God. Where God is, darkness flees away.

And this is prophesied by more than the Incarnation. The change which has come over history since the Advent shows that the new creation is slowly but surely filling the earth. Eighteen hundred years ago, slavery was in all civilized lands: to-day it is abolished by all civilized lands. Eighteen hundred years ago, in the most magnificent temples, licentiousness was worship: to-day it is a shame to speak of such things. Eighteen hundred years ago, families of culture and the rulers of the world's greatest empire sought pleasure in seeing gladiators kill one another: to-day even the fighting of animals for pleasure is almost everywhere prohibited. Eighteen hundred years ago there was not a hospital nor asylum nor home for outcast children on the earth: to-day such in-

stitutions shine like stars in the world's darkness. Eighteen hundred years ago, criminals were incarcerated in pits, caves, and slimy dungeons: to-day nearly all civilized nations remember that a criminal has not ceased to be a man. Eighteen hundred years ago, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was not known, and men thought that peace for a guilty conscience could be obtained only by attempting impossible things in the way of expiation: to-day, on Indian mountains, by African rivers, in European cities, on American prairies, beneath the Southern Cross, on Pacific islands, on ships that furrow the great waters, there is echoed the doxology of the ages, "Glory be to the Father." The Incarnation is the prophecy of a day which has already dawned.

The Incarnation is a revelation of the process by which this prophecy is to be realized. The whole life of Jesus may be expressed in one word, *self-renunciation*. He was never anxious about what people should think of him; he refused worship; insulted, he returned blessing; he spent almost all his time with two classes,—sufferers and sinners. To relieve suffering and to save from sin was the end of his ministry. With infinite power at his command, he refused to use it to defend himself. The principle of his life he stated in these words: "He that would save his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life shall find it." From the baptism to the cross he was always thinking of others. The

more he was abused the more tireless became his efforts to do good. He practiced his own preaching and proved that it is best, when smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." His self-renunciation was the secret of his power. He died, and committed his work to his disciples; by following in his footsteps they were to complete what he began. The Incarnation means self-renunciation. By that alone can Christ's work be continued. Those who work with him must be like him. They must be willing to be insulted without resenting it; they must work for the good they can do, not for the reward they can get; they must not expect appreciation; they must not seek self-elevation. It must be with churches as with individuals. The church which seeks to up-build itself and fill its pews, and which makes the salvation of men and their growth in righteousness secondary, is not a church of Christ. His church is composed of those, in all sects, and outside of all,—and those only,—who ask no questions about self or reward, but who move straight on in delivering the message of warning and invitation, regardless of consequences.

And what examples of this spirit glorify the history of the church! Twelve apostles, and ten of that twelve martyrs—this tells something. An English writer pictures a beautiful young woman of the nobility going to the slums of East London

and living in a tenement-house, that she might become acquainted with the women who were slowly killing themselves with their needles. "An exquisite picture of heroic self-devotion, but only a novel!" you say. Yes, only a novel; but that novel tells of the only way by which want and woe can be permanently relieved—by some one from above going down and living among the sorrows he would lighten. The English novelist borrowed his conception from the New Testament. A Moravian missionary sold himself as a slave that he might preach the gospel to slaves and be heard—that is what incarnation means. In the heart of Central Africa, good Bishop Hannington has just been offered as a sacrifice by savages. They kept him as a curiosity until afraid that death would rob them of their prize, and then they killed him. And now the eyes of all the world are on that heathen tribe, and the work of the Bishop will move more swiftly because of his death. Luther's self-sacrifice made the Reformation possible. The fires around Savonarola filled Europe with light. The Pilgrims renounced home, wealth, comfort, because of devotion to truth, and unwittingly laid the foundations of the great Republic. All who serve humanity and all who hasten the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves" begin with the central truth of the Incarnation—self-renunciation.

Some time the Kingdom of God will come;

some time men will do as they would be done by ; and it will be because the Incarnation has been completed and the whole human race has become one with God.

The Incarnation was the fulfillment of an eternal purpose: it was a prophecy of what men are to become: it was a picture of the way by which the prophecy will be realized. The divine voice is sounding still: "Behold I stand at the door and knock," and still it is given to you and to me to decide whether we shall, by renouncing self and opening our hearts, become one with Jesus Christ, as he was one with the Father.

VIII.

THE VICARIOUS PRINCIPLE IN THE
UNIVERSE.

"Given the universality of love, the universality of vicarious sacrifice is given also."—HORACE BUSHNELL.

"There is, perhaps, no greater satisfaction to the Christian than that which arises from his perceiving that the Revealed system is rooted deep in the natural course of things, of which it is merely the result and completion; that his Saviour has interpreted for him the faint and broken accents of nature; and that in them, so interpreted, he has, as if in some old prophecy, at once the evidence and the lasting memorial of the truths of the Gospel."—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

"The sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life which is lived, not to self but to God."—F. W. ROBERTSON.

**"Life evermore is fed by death,
In earth, and sea, and sky;
And that a rose may breathe its breath,
Something must die."**

VIII.

THE VICARIOUS PRINCIPLE IN THE UNIVERSE.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows : . . . the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed."—*Isaiah* liii. 4, 5.

THE purpose of this sermon is not a discussion of the doctrine of the Atonement, nor to enter into any extended consideration of its nature. Its primary object is to show that the Atonement was something without which the universe would have been as incomplete as our solar system without the planet Jupiter. The Vicarious Principle in the Universe is the large form in which our subject phrases itself, and I know not how to simplify it.

Does the vicarious principle find expression in all parts of the universe, in all gradations of life, or is it something which comes into prominence and culminates only in the supreme event of human history, the death of Jesus Christ?

What does the word "vicarious" signify? The common definition is, "The position, place, office, of one person as assumed by another. Acting or suffering for another." The origin of the word is evident. It is the same in the

root as "vice" in "vicegerent," "viceroy," "vicar," "vicar-general," "vice-president," and the like. It is a word which carries always a face of substitution, indicating that one person comes in place of another. A vice-president is one who is to act in certain contingencies as, and for, the president. The Pope is called the Vicar of Christ because supposed to be authorized to fill Christ's place. Any person acts vicariously so far as he comes into the place and assumes the duties, the sufferings, the responsibilities of another. The word is not found in the Bible. It has been adopted, however, to express the central thought of the Bible.

The definition given above seems to confine vicarious relations to persons, but the principle may be as true of an animal as of a man. The horse which is cut loose from the traces for the wolves to feed upon, while the master escapes, dies instead of the man. A traveler accompanied by his dog is starving. He must die or kill the dog for food. The death of the dog is the life of the man. The one dies instead of the other. This principle is the condition of all existence. A note in an admirable article on "Natural Selection and Natural Theology," by Eustace R. Conder, D.D., gives the following: "Another comprehensive and profoundly impressive view of design is presented by the mutual relations of plants and animals. The constitution of the atmosphere is equally indispensable

to each order of life ; but each draws in from the air that which sustains its own life and is death to the other, and returns that which to itself is useless, or poisonous, but which to the other is the breath of life. The relations of herbivorous and carnivorous animals are another illustration. Yet a writer whom I have before quoted has the hardihood to say that 'If all, or even some, species had been so interrelated as to each other's necessities, organic species might then have been likened to a countless multitude of voices all singing in one harmonious psalm of praise. But, as it is, we see no vestige of such co-ordination ; each species is for itself, and for itself alone—an outcome of the always and everywhere fiercely raging struggle for life.'” To this Dr. Conder replies: “This reckless assertion is refuted by the flavor of every peach, the chemical composition of every morsel of our daily food ; by the labor of every earth-worm plowing his dark path underground ; by the structure of every wheat-plant storing the food on which the labor, commerce, politics, public and family life of nations depend. One person or thing taking the place of another, in some way and for some purpose, prevails everywhere. Even the doctrine of Evolution requires the vicarious principle, the life of the higher rising out of and conditioned upon the death of the lower. According to this doctrine of Evolution there is a scheme of adaptation to circumstances, which

reaches through all time, from the first appearance of life on our globe, which enlists all the force of the universe, co-ordinates all the conditions of life, bases birth and growth on decay and death, and maintains in stable equilibrium this immense living Whole, every member of which is momentarily undergoing dissolution and reconstruction."*

The meaning and reach of the principle of which we are speaking is now evident. Throughout all that we know of the universe in which we dwell, runs the principle of one taking the place of another to perform its office, to endure its trials, voluntarily or involuntarily to do or be something for another, or for others, without which they could not be what they are or do what they do. The Why of the vicarious relationships is among the mysteries. They are facts. There must they be left.

We will consider a few illustrations.

Through all we know of the universe there is the fact of vicarious service. By "service" I do not mean what is technically called "sacrifice," although there may be an element of sacrifice in it. Everywhere the work of one takes the place of that of others and is truly vicarious, unless it should be maintained that there is always a conscious delegation of duties where this element is found. Work for another, or instead of another,

* *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1882, p. 26.

is recognized as legitimate and universal. There is in it no injustice. The universe is constructed with a place for vicarious service. It is found among animals. The eagle gathers food for his mate and the eaglets. The lion brings his prey and drops it for his cubs to feed upon. The tiniest bird recognizes his duty to take the place of his mate as a provider while the eggs are hatching. This is instinct. Yes, but it is a case where instinct leads to the performance of duties which, under other circumstances, would be performed by some one else. It is, therefore, an instance of vicarious service.

From Constantinople comes a story of sea-gulls. One became wounded. The next day the flock, as if by prearrangement, started off over the sea of Marmora; but they left behind them their wounded companion and two others to minister to his wants. These brought him food. They waited by him until his strength should increase. After a day or two, the three rose from the ground and started on their flight. Soon the wings of the wounded bird failed. Then his companions went under him and carried him, until he was rested. They used their wings instead of his. This was vicarious service.

This principle needs no more than a mention when applied to human life. Parents stand in a vicarious relation to their children. Officers of state occupy the same relation toward their constituents. Every judge, juror, legislator, and

all executive officers, perform duties which belong to others, and because we have many duties we delegate a part to those who can give to them their whole attention. Officers of state are, vicariously, servants. They stand in our places, as our representatives, to do work which we must either do or have done.

Vicarious service may be performed and its end accomplished when there is no conscious or voluntary participation in it by the one helped. I may owe a debt to the bank. That debt may be canceled by an unknown friend, and it is as really canceled as if I had paid it myself; but I have no right to compel another to pay my debts or to be my servant. The universe serves the individual. Its laws and forces bring to him what he cannot get, and do for him what he cannot do, for himself. He is sick. All his skill and knowledge of remedies fail. The sunshine and air come to him and make a new man of him. They have done something for him—instead of him.

The following passage from Robertson's sermon on "Caiphas's View of Vicarious Sacrifice" exactly illustrates vicarious service, but hardly vicarious sacrifice. I will substitute the word service for sacrifice. "Vicarious service is the law of being. It is a mysterious and fearful thing to observe how all God's universe is built upon this law, how it penetrates and pervades all nature, so that, if it were to cease, nature would cease to

exist. The mountain-rock must have its surface rusted into putrescence and become dead soil before the herb can grow. The destruction of the mineral is the life of the vegetable. Upon the life of the vegetable world, the myriad forms of higher life sustain themselves—still the same law. Farther still: have we never pondered over that mystery of nature—the dove struck dumb by the hawk—the deer trembling beneath the stroke of the lion—the winged fish falling into the jaws of the dolphin? It is the same solemn law again."

In this fact of service there may be the action of a will, and there may be only the operation of a law. Service may be voluntary or involuntary. The principle of vicarious *service* is universal.

Another fact equally conspicuous is the universality of vicarious *suffering*. This is one of the gloomiest problems that the mind ever fronts. The innocent suffer for the guilty—not merely in behalf of, but instead of, the guilty. Suffering which results from effort to help has in it an element of compensation. Suffering which comes simply because one has the misfortune to be related to those who transgress law, and which is entailed by the folly of others without volition of those afflicted, all are powerless to prevent. This is a mystery of mysteries. The members of the race are tied together inextricably. The law of heredity is universal and re-

morseless. One may have nothing but pleasure. His indulgences are so regulated that they never get control of him. He gets the honey from them, but his course is such that his child is born with a tendency to evil which is well-nigh resistless. The father may eat *sweet* grapes, and the children's teeth be set on edge. The whole history of the doctrine of heredity illustrates the fact of which we are speaking. Æschylus as explicitly as Ezekiel declares that an old transgression sometimes abides to the third generation, as illustrated in the unhappy family of Laius:

“ With urgent force the Fury treadeth
To generations three,
Avenging Laius' sin on Laius' race.” *

Again, in these terrible lines is repeated the recognition of the same fact:

“ What hath been, and shall be ever,
That when purple gouts bedash
The guilty ground, then blood doth blood
Demand, and blood for blood shall flow.
Fury to Havoc cries; and Havoc,
The tainted track of blood pursuing,
From age to age works woe.” †

A mother dresses her child with short stockings and takes him into the bitter cold on a winter's day. She is closely wrapped in seal-skins. The child is made an invalid for life. The suffering is the child's—the error the mother's. The problem of punishment in government is an exceed-

* “Thebes,” 742.

† “Choëphon,” 398.

ingly difficult one to arrange. A man was a defaulter. His punishment was years in state-prison. His wife had committed no sin. Her disgrace came upon her like lightning from a clear sky. It was her misfortune to have such a husband. She suffered because of his crime. She endured what he could not endure. An imbecile pope and an intriguing emperor cunningly made two women believe that it was for the good of the church and the glory of Christ to have the power of Romanism once more dominant in the ancient land of the Aztecs. Pio Nono and Francis Joseph employed Carlotta, daughter of Leopold of Belgium, and Eugénie of France to influence the French Emperor to establish Maximilian in Mexico. The farce was prolonged until it became a tragedy. The French Emperor was more anxious for himself than for Maximilian, and left him to his own resources. The Pope had nothing but words to offer. Juarez rallied the republicans and overthrew the Empire. The Grand Duke who sought to be Emperor was shot. And now for years poor Carlotta has been insane, imagining at one time that her husband is coming to her, and then raving at those who detain him. She is suffering for others. It is not punishment, for the sin was not hers. Guiteau fired a shot. General Garfield's eighty days of agony, the suffering of his wife and family, the anguish of his poor old mother, all resulted, besides the long trial, with its accompaniments of

shame and disgrace. If the suffering had been punishment it would have fallen on the head of the criminal. Instead of his suffering others suffered, while he flaunted his egotism until it became a stench in the nostrils of the world. These are conspicuous examples. The principle is of wide application. Suffering marks its bloody pathway wherever human hearts beat. Parents bear the griefs and carry the sorrows of their children, as Christ bears the griefs and carries the sorrows of the world. A young man commits a sin, and, perhaps, half enjoys the publicity. The arrow pierces his mother's heart, and blood flows. Then there is another sphere of which it is difficult to speak because the facts are hard to reach. Wives carry their husband's sins, and walk through long Gethsemanes with agony and bloody sweat which falls inward. The mistakes of youth fall with ruining force upon those who had no part in them, and who only happen to be linked to those from whose past they cannot escape. There is no solution of this problem. As days and nights are linked through the year, so are men who do wrong, and the innocent who suffer for their wrong-doing, linked together around the world.

This doctrine of social liability is developed by Æschylus in the case of Amphiaraus, "a discreet, upright, good, and pious man, who wished not to seem, but to be, good"—a great prophet who foresaw the disastrous issue of the Theban expedition, and forewarned the leaders, but who, led

on by a high sense of honor, went with them and fell like them. Then says the poet,

“ Death’s unblest fruit is reaped
By him who sows in Até’s fields. The man
Who, being godly, with ungodly men
And hot-brained sailors mounts the brittle bark,
He, when the God-detested crew goes down,
Shall with the guilty, guiltless perish.” *

Mrs. Browning’s awful picture is true to life :

“ Breath freezes on my lips to moan :
As one alone, once not alone,
I sit and knock at nature’s door,
Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,
Whose desolated days go on.” †

If those who did wrong were the only sufferers, the sense of justice would temper the pain of the sight ; but when we remember that probably ten innocent persons suffer for the wrongdoing of every guilty one ; when we see that they suffer what he and he only ought to endure, according to every law of justice, the problem becomes one of appalling magnitude. Explanation is impossible. All that can be said is that the law of vicarious suffering, like the law of vicarious service, is universal.

The universality of suffering has led to the theory, among ignorant people, that suffering was always to be regarded as punishment. Calamity, pain of body, anguish of mind, have led men to believe that the gods were following with

* “ Thebes,” 601.

† “ De Profundis.”

vengeance. This fact leads us to ask whether there is, or has been, or can be, in the nature of things, any such thing as vicarious punishment? Punishment is simply penalty for the transgression of law. In the nature of things it can fall upon no one but the transgressor. If the blow falls upon another it ceases to be punishment. It may be called by any name which may be given it, but it can be called punishment only after the word has been entirely emptied of its original meaning. Guilt and penalty are never charged upon a person known to be innocent, although in a hundred ways that person may suffer for the guilt of others. Luther asserted this contradiction, and, in asserting it, denied the possibility of an innocent person being punished for the guilty. He declared that Christ became guilty of all the sins of all the thieves, adulterers, murderers, who ever lived, and then was punished because He was guilty; but he did not venture to say that being innocent He was punished. In order that I might present an opinion of real value on this subject, I addressed a letter to one of the most learned lawyers of New York, asking him whether the principle of vicarious punishment, as distinct from vicarious suffering, was, or ever had been, recognized in human law. His answer was as follows:

“Your inquiry as to vicarious punishment admits of a more extended answer than you call for. Under municipal law it has never in a civil-

ized community been recognized except to the extent of making a part suffer for a larger number of guilty, which is analogous to the military punishment of revolted soldiers by decimation; or again, of holding sureties liable for principals, which in the case of bail for criminals was formerly subject to a sort of personal penalty, if the principal failed to appear, or should be guilty of any wrong against which the surety undertook to be amenable. This also was analogous to the military usage of taking hostages, who were held liable for any failure of the party giving the hostages to perform what was agreed.

"By the English common law a town was liable for robbery or riot committed within the limits, and all the inhabitants were subject to a tax which might be inflicted arbitrarily upon any number. In this country a like liability formerly existed for a debt of a city or town in case of the bankruptcy or refusal to pay by such city or town, but this is obsolete. The Roman law as to the *decurions* held them liable for the taxes imposed upon a municipality, and this could be enforced by penal infliction."

In no one of the cases mentioned in this letter is punishment for another's crime inflicted on an innocent person. There is suffering because of connection with others. There is punishment because of offenses growing out of circumstances connected with the offenses, but in no case men-

tioned in this letter is the innocent allowed to bear the penalty which belongs to another.

The sacrifices of the Jews could hardly be adduced as exceptions to this rule. Among them "no sacrifices secured forgiveness for specific moral offenses." * If that is true, evidently the guilt was never borne except in a symbolical way. Fairbairn, in "The Typology of Scripture," mentions different classes of sins for which sacrifices were offered. "If a man had knowingly failed to bear testimony in a court of law against men whom he knew to be justly accused of a crime, he was required to confess his sin and bring a lamb or a kid for a sin-offering; or, if he was poor, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; or a small quantity of fine flour, and then his sin was to be forgiven." † This sin-offering had nothing in it, however, of the nature of substituted punishment. Among other instances were those who had been guilty of an oath of which they were ignorant and which they could not perform, fraud, adultery with a slave, etc.; yet in none of these cases was there substituted punishment. Dale says: "God forgave only when by the voluntary act of the guilty the victim of injustice no longer suffered for the crime." ‡

As to the bearing of this point on the death of Jesus Christ, it must be said that no one ever

* Dale, "Atonement," p. 466.

† Clark's edition, 4th ed., vol. ii. pp. 317-392.

‡ "Atonement," p. 469.

thinks now of teaching that Christ was "punished," but rather that his sufferings were substituted for our punishment, which is a very different thing.

Mozley, in his sermon on the Atonement, in speaking of the objections made to the doctrine of the Atonement, says: "The point upon which the objector has fixed is the substitution of one man for another to suffer for sin; but he has not taken this point as it is represented and interpreted in the doctrine itself, but barely and nakedly, simply as the principle of vicarious punishment. Thus stated then—that one man can be guilty of the crime, and another punished in his stead; that a criminal can suffer penalty by deputy, and have sentence executed upon him by substitute—this notion of justice is a barbarous and untenable one. It is to be observed that according to this idea of sacrifice for sin, it is not in the least necessary that the sacrifice should be voluntary, because the whole principle of sacrifice is swallowed up in the idea of vicarious punishment; and punishment, vicarious or other, does not require a voluntary sufferer, but only a sufferer. It was this low and degraded idea of sacrifice which had possession of the ancient world for so many ages, and which produced, as its natural fruit, human sacrifices, with all the horrible and revolting cruelties attending them. . . . As if, indeed, the Almighty could ever possibly be appeased by a struggling victim, dragged up in horror and agony to be a sacrifice

for sin against his will, recoiling at every step from the purpose to which he was devoted." *

The only exceptions, then, to the rule that vicarious punishments are not recognized are the human sacrifices,—which may be typified by the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis, or the bloody rites of the Druids in the oak groves of Mona,—a system which is recognized in the universe in the same train with pestilences, superstitions, and excrescences. But here again there were really no vicarious punishments; there was only suffering on the part of those who were unfortunate enough to be chosen as victims of the sacrifice. Dale, in his work on the Atonement, † says: "If we attempt a theory of the death of Christ on the hypothesis that it corresponded to what would occur in the administration of human justice, if some illustrious man, as conspicuous for his virtue and public services as for his rank, died as a substitute for a number of obscure persons who had been guilty of treason, we are confronted at once by an objection which admits of no reply. Such a substitution could not be admitted. It would be contrary to the principles of justice, and in the highest degree injurious to the state." The Grecian king did not suffer half of his son's punishment; he suffered something which would express his horror of his son's crime, and vindicate the law as much as if his son

* "University Sermons," pp. 165, 166.

† p. 358.

had suffered it all. No person can be punished for another. When an innocent man is executed he suffers because of the mistake of the state, but in the nature of things "punishment," as such, can be inflicted only on the criminal.

In tracing the existence and operation of the vicarious principle we have already met facts which it has been hard to catalogue under the heads which have been named. As we rise in the scale of life we find not only service and suffering vicarious in their nature, but we find that they are voluntarily undertaken, and, further, that they are sought at a cost voluntarily given by the one serving or suffering. Here and there are examples of those who can expect nothing in return, voluntarily serving the lowest at the price of weariness and pain. That is sacrifice—vicarious sacrifice, sacrifice which is necessitated by one who is higher assuming the place and entering into the condition of another for his benefit. Sacrifice implies the giving of something for the privilege of serving. It differs from simple service, therefore, in that it is *service at a cost*, for no promised remuneration, and *always voluntary*.

The higher the order of life the more conspicuous does this fact become. At first there is only instinct, as when the parent bird provides for its young, or the mother suckles her infant. This can hardly be called sacrifice. Neither can the service done by those who are our representatives in the administration of government be

called sacrifice, since they usually work for pay, and their service may be as selfish as anything else. But by and by the mother sees her son in peril, and has to choose between her social pleasures and his safety. The struggle may be hard. She decides for her son. That is in a measure an act of sacrifice, though not the highest, because it is the result of a love of kindred. Many motives which are right may come in to help her decision, but which are yet more or less selfish. There is something in advance of this, although in all these there is somewhat that is vicarious.

For example, note the devotion of patriots who die in battle for their country. Here is reached a sublime height of sacrifice. Men who, like Nathan Hale, calmly face the fact that some one must die in order that the country may live, are not perhaps very many, but still they confront us here and there in history. Such a man was Engineer Leeds, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, whose act was one of the grandest ever recorded. I can never recall the picture of that man, with his pale face, his mouth fixed, his eyes eager, rushing to his duty and his death in the flames that six hundred people might live, without a thrill of something more than admiration. These men illustrate in its lower forms the principle of vicarious sacrifice. I say in its lower forms, for there is that in the consciousness of a great achievement, or in great danger, which may be rewarded even if only by a glorious name, which

is not quite free from the element of selfishness. Hale and Leeds died in sublime vicarious relationships as truly as any men who ever lived; yet the principle has still loftier illustrations.

In a recent biography are the following words: "There they laid him on a rough bed in the hut where he spent the night. Next day he lay undisturbed. He asked a few wandering questions about the country. Nothing occurred to attract notice during the early part of the night, but, at four o'clock in the morning, the boy who lay at his door called in alarm for Susi, fearing that their master was dead. By the candle still burning they saw him, not in bed, but kneeling at the bedside with his head buried in his hands upon the pillow. The sad yet not unexpected truth soon became evident: he had passed away on the farthest of all his journeys, and without a single attendant near him. But he had died in the act of prayer,—prayer offered in that reverential attitude about which he was always so particular." And who was that man? and what was he doing? His name the world knows. All alone he was trying to get the facts which would result in the healing of what he so vividly called "the open sore of the world"—the slave trade. In the presence of Livingstone dead in equatorial Africa; of John Howard sailing on an infected ship from Constantinople to Venice in order that he might be put into a lazaretto, and thus get some clue to the awful mystery of the plague for the pur-

pose of destroying its power ; of Henry Martyn, the pride of the English universities, burying himself among the heathen, and dying of the plague at Tocat, few will fail to recognize a principle at work such as has not yet been mentioned in this sermon, and yet which is not altogether uncommon

“ In this loud, swelling tide of human care and crime.”

This is vicarious sacrifice in its highest human manifestation. There have been examples of it in all ages and under all forms of religion. The Spirit of Christ has been at work many times where his name has been unknown. Always as men have become unselfish, as their capacity to love has been enlarged, the tendency to give at cost of labor, of pain, of life, if need be, to uplift and help others, has found freer expression. The natural language of joy is laughter ; of sorrow, a sigh ; of love, sacrifice. There can be no sacrifice which is not, according to the love in it, vicarious. If, then, there is a higher than human love, it will show itself in a higher than human sacrifice, and will enter into the conditions and relations of the objects of love.

We are now in the presence of a great truth. According to the perfection of being is its tendency to enter into the conditions of those who are beneath and lowest, for the purpose of uplifting and saving at any cost. Then, following all analogies of lower life, we must say—As the

heavens are above the earth, so is God above man, and so much greater is the tendency of the love of God to enter into vicarious relationships with those who are in misery and sin. That is a magnificent thought of Dr. Bushnell—all "saints and angels in vicarious sacrifice," "the Eternal Father in vicarious sacrifice," "the Holy Spirit in vicarious sacrifice,"—and yet Dr. Bushnell only copied it from the New Testament.

The course of our argument is evident. In all created things, in life in all of its gradations, there is seen, dimly at first, but ever growing to clearer manifestation, the vicarious principle. This fact shows that the Incarnation and the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, instead of being monstrous and without analogy in nature, are in harmony with the growth of universal life and in line with the process of history.

Thus have been grouped a few facts concerning the vicarious principle. It is a part of the universe as the colors of a sunbeam are a part of the sun's rays. There are vicarious service, vicarious suffering, and vicarious sacrifice,—honored among men and angels, and by the Deity himself. Vicarious punishment, so-called, has been practiced only in rude stages of society, and is conceivable only to imperfect and cruel conceptions of the Deity.

It hardly needs a mention of passages to show that Jesus Christ entered into the vicarious condition so as to become the servant of man. He

healed diseases; the empty wine-jars blushed with new wine at the magic of his word; he went about doing good; he washed the disciples' feet, even those of Peter and Judas. By as much as he was divinely perfect he appreciated the urgency of human infirmities; and by so much was his loving heart ever urging his willing hands to loving service, which was vicarious, because it was doing for others what they could not, or would not, do for themselves.

Vicariously he bore human suffering. Like some sad sweet strain of ethereal music sounds the prophecy, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." The pathos of that bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" show the completeness with which he had identified himself with man's experiences of sorrow. The world's suffering is an ocean: Jesus, "the Christ of God," sounded its depths.

Jesus Christ gave himself in vicarious sacrifice for man. "He made himself of no reputation and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "He gave his life a ransom for many." "But God commended his love to us, in

that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Jesus Christ as the representative man, the perfect man, performed the services to God and men which all men ought to perform; therefore he serves for us, or instead of us.

Jesus Christ bore the sorrows and sins of the world in his body and on his sympathy, and his love was freighted with it, until his heart broke; thus he suffered vicariously for us.

Jesus Christ voluntarily sacrificed himself in entering human relations and enduring human experiences and suffering death because of man's sin, that he might save that which was lost.

Our study has brought into clear relief one practical truth:—He who would uplift or ennoble humanity can do it only by entering into vicarious relations. Something of himself must be given by him who would do for his brother anything worth doing. The law of sacrifice is the law of life. The principle of the Incarnation, the higher coming down to the lower and entering its circumstances and submitting to its limitations, is the principle by which all enduring progress and moral regenerations are achieved. The way of individual salvation and of the world's redemption must ever be what à Kempis calls "the royal way of the holy cross."

By the humiliation of the Eternal Son of God, by his Incarnation into vicarious relationships on the earth, by his agony and bloody sweat, by his

cross and passion, he has honored the eternal law of righteousness, exhibited the awful nature of sin, shown that the vicarious pathway is the pathway of life, in a real sense borne human guilt and sorrow, and secured for man what could be secured in no other way, pardon and peace, because in no other way could man be brought to accept their conditions. Life out of death, joy out of sorrow, holiness out of wickedness, by strength stooping to weakness, and innocence taking guilt by the hand,—this is a law of the universe.

Among all on the earth and in spheres of light it is the glory of being, to humble itself in service and suffering and sacrifice to save being; and the loftier the sphere and the more glorious the intelligence, the more gladly is the privilege embraced, until, at last, reaching the Supreme and Ineffable, in effulgence which no eye can endure, in the splendor of infinities and eternities where light and love are one, we are brought face to face with the throne in the midst of which is, as it were, "a Lamb which had been slain."

IX.

THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE.

" There are two very bad things in this resolving of men's faith and practice into the illumination of such a Spirit as they can give no account of, such as does not enlighten their reason or enable them to render their doctrine intelligible to others. First, it defaces and make useless that part of the image of God in us, which we call reason; and secondly, it takes away that advantage, which raises Christianity above all other religions, that she dares appeal to so solid a faculty."

—S. T. COLERIDGE.

" Know you not that you will see your feet in fetters when you listen not to the admonition of mankind ?"—SADI.

" The earth-lights never lead us beyond the shadows grim,
And the lone heart never resteth till it findeth rest in Him.

.
He gives the witness that excels all argument or sign;
When we have heard it for ourselves, we know it is divine."

—F. R. HAVERGAL.

IX.

THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

1 *John* i. 3.

THE writer of the above words was nearly one hundred years old. He was the only one of the apostolic band who died a natural death. The long evening of his life was spent in Ephesus, in the midst of almost unparalleled natural beauty. On one side were the violet waters of the Ægean Sea, and on the other, long ranges of purple mountains. During the time spent in Ephesus, when all the friends of his youth had died, and he alone had seen the sacred face of the Teacher of Nazareth, the Gospel and the Epistles which bear his name were written. They breathe the spirit of Christ. They echo the "Sermon on the Mount." The first words of the Epistle speak of personal experience, and it is this fact which has led me to select that passage for my text. Before writing about Christ, this venerable Apostle tells those whom he addresses why he believes in Christ. He appeals to the testimony of his personal experience. He

recognizes no external authority except the Master. Jesus had had nothing to commend him except what he was. He had antagonized the established order. He was poor, humble, a heretic, ecclesiastically a criminal. Yet there was something about him which so took hold of that uneducated fisherman, John, and transformed him, that he became one of the teachers of the ages. Thus, when John's friends came, as doubtless they often did, and asked about the wonderful Teacher, how he looked and what he said, and at last why he believed him to be indeed the Christ, we can almost see the eyes flash from out the wrinkled face and snow-white beard as he answers: "Why do I believe in him? I have seen him; I have handled him; he was not like unto other men—what I have seen and heard I declare unto you."

Taking his words for our text, we consider to-day our reasons for believing in Jesus Christ. In proposing this subject, certain suggestions and limitations are necessary.

I say "our" reasons. That implies that the reasons which convince some persons may not have weight with others. To expect all to be equally impressed by the same evidence would be as wise as to expect a nervous and a phlegmatic temperament to be equally sensitive to the same medicine. There are as many evidences of Christianity as there are people to be convinced.

Different ages and varying degrees of intelligence require different evidence. It may be

right or wrong; the fact is that the generation which, with comparative unanimity, accepts the theory of Evolution in science and philosophy must be met with different arguments from former ones, that never heard of the newly found principle.

Our inquiry has nothing to do with the inspiration of the Bible, or with the interpretation of its different texts, or with any "body of divinity." These are important—they touch the teaching of Christ at many points. But it is not of them that we are inquiring. We should have a faith so grounded that, if criticism should take our Bible all to pieces, it would no more destroy Christianity than taking a telescope to pieces would destroy the stars. If the Bible were to be annihilated, Jesus Christ would remain; if all the foundations on which faith has been supposed to rest were to be knocked away, the fact would not be destroyed that men for eighteen hundred years have been born from above to a diviner life. Essential Christianity, which is the life of God in humanity, is indestructible. Not the less tenaciously should we cling to the doctrines which are sacred to us; but we should rise high enough to see that what is emphasized in America is not what receives most emphasis in Germany; that to what the Englishman holds most dear the Italian or the Indian may give a secondary place, and yet that each nationality emphasizes what is most important for it; while the great truths of the Gospel, like mountain ranges,

are untouched by the opinions of those who are not large enough to see more than one or two peaks at a time.

Although it is true that each generation, possibly each individual, may require evidence peculiar to itself to convince it of the truthfulness of Christianity, there can be no doubt that there are some reasons which are valid in all generations and for all people. It is to those that we now turn. Like the Apostle John, we appeal to experience.

We believe in Jesus Christ because of the correspondence between what he is and what all men recognize that they need.

Is he divine? That is not our question at this time; let that wait. Is he not a mythical character? The question is absurd, but never mind,—let an answer to that wait. Call Jesus Christ by whatever name you please; fancy that he is entirely imaginary; denounce the Scriptures in which his story is told; but still he alone of all who have lived on the earth has brought something tangible to humanity to meet its universal and otherwise inappeasable longings.

Four questions have been asked everywhere, and in all ages: Is there a God? How ought man to live? How can the consciousness of guilt be appeased? Does death end all? These questions, and the answers they have received, condense the religious history of the world. We ask them ourselves. Then we go out among our

neighbors, and find that their hearts are as heavy as ours. They ask, What is back of that impenetrable curtain? What means the consciousness that I ought to do right? Can it be that I, who am thrilled with such deathless aspirations, shall fall as the leaves fall? The narrow circle of neighborhood is enlarged and observation goes abroad, and everywhere, among the throngs of cities, in the silence of hamlets, on the remote frontiers, where sunny islands sleep beneath southern stars, in sight of the awful splendors of Himalayan mountains, in the very heart of equatorial Africa, it finds the same longings. It may be doubted if a human being lives who does not at times ask these four questions with more or less distinctness. They are asked everywhere. They have been asked in all time. Again we start from ourselves, and travel, not out over the earth, but backward along the track of history. If we stop anywhere for two thousand years, we are met by inquirers like ourselves. If we read Seneca's "Morals," we find that it presumes God, and asks about human duty; with the same subjects Cicero and Aurelius and Epictetus were occupied. As I read their words it seems to me that I am listening to the voices of near friends. Young men put the same questions in nearly the same words with these old philosophers, and the philosophers were as impotent as we are. I go further back and read Plato, and

find those wonderful dialogues occupied with exactly the same themes that are studied in our colleges and theological seminaries. Do I assert too much when I say that all we have of Plato and Socrates is chiefly occupied with these four questions?—Is there a God? How ought man to live? How can a man who has once been wrong get right? Does death end all?

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said in my hearing: "If the world's library were burning, with our Bible and Plato and Shakespeare we would save our Plutarch." The sage of Concord named four books as great mountain peaks of the world's literature. Will any one question that those four books are occupied almost altogether with the four questions named?

But let us get outside of usual lines. The study of comparative religion is opening wondrous riches in new fields of religious and literary inquiry. To-day the Zend Avesta of the ancient fire-worshippers and the hymns of the Vedas are read almost everywhere. They are filled with passages of supernal beauty; they reflect the splendor of the eternal mountains; they breathe the fragrance of early dawns; they are musical with voices of ancient songs; and they are just as full of our four questions as are the religious poetry and theological literature of Great Britain and America in our time.

Immanuel Kant said that it is the business of

philosophy to answer three questions: What may I know? What ought I to do? For what may I hope? Attempts to answer those questions describe all the world's philosophy, from Plato to Herbert Spencer. But those questions were stated with equal clearness four thousand years ago. One of the oldest of books is the poem of Job: I do not wonder that Carlyle called it the grandest book ever written by man. In that, you find Kant's questions anticipated when philosophy as a science was unknown. Hear Job: "O that I knew where I might find Him!" "How shall a man be just [or right] with God?" "If a man die, shall he live again?" The philosopher's questions only echo the patriarch's.

Thus, starting from ourselves and going outward, we have found that all men everywhere are asking the same questions; and starting from ourselves and going backward, we have found that the same questions have been asked in all ages: Is there a God? What ought I to do? If I have done wrong, how can I get right? Does death end all? These are the eternal voices. The one who best answers them will command allegiance, whatever his name and wherever he comes from. No one else can claim authority over us. Consciousness of dependence is forced down upon us with the weight of worlds. Sorrows sometimes seem the only realities. Death keeps creeping closer and closer. Mrs. Browning voiced the yearning of the world when she wrote:

“ We sow the glebe, we reap the corn,
We build the house where we may rest;
And then, at moments, suddenly,
We look up into the great wide sky
Inquiring wherefore we were born,
For earnest, or for jest ?”

There are various answers to our four questions. At this time, those of only one Master can be considered. Jesus Christ has answered them. Let us take up his answers exactly as we would consider those of Marcus Aurelius or Buddha, and not hesitate to say that if Buddha or the great Roman had given the more satisfactory answers, we should have followed the one who answered our questions best.

And first as to Deity: Is there a sympathetic Person back of all that is visible?

In a hospital is a woman without a relative or friend. She is in terrible agony. Her body is bruised; her heart is broken. The attendants are kind, but she is as lonely as if she were the only person in the universe. Day and night these questions continually rise: “Is this misery endless? Does any one love me enough to cause blessing to come out of this agony?” Behind the pale face and burning eyes throb these universal questions. Jesus Christ met them at the beginning of his ministry. He seems to have forced them into prominence at once:—You ask me about prayer. All you need to know is this: “After this manner pray ye: Our Father.” His answer to the first of the world’s four questions

is, "Our Father." This universe is all the Father's house; all men are the Father's children; he bears griefs and carries sorrows; he causes all things to work for good. To Kant's question, "What may I know?" Jesus answers, "Our Father." To Job's wild cry, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" Jesus answers, "He is your Father."

Why do I believe in Jesus Christ? I answer, first, because he shows our orphaned hearts that we are not like driftwood on an infinite ocean; not like wrecks rushing to an abyss; not like enemies who can give pleasure only by being destroyed; but the children of a Father who arches his heavens in benediction over the evil and the good, and causes his mercies to fall like rain on the just and the unjust.

But next:—How ought I to live?

This inquiry has been made as eagerly among nations in which the name of Jesus was unknown as in Christian lands. In all lands men have recognized that they ought to do something. There has been difference as to what was commanded. The Spartans believed that it was right to steal, but wrong to be found out. The Hindoo wife used to ascend the funeral pyre of her husband with as good conscience as that of the Christian woman who goes to a missionary society to pray for the heathen. Moses justified divorce, and Jesus denounced it for all causes save one. All teachers and all people recognize that they ought

to do what seems to them to be right. The *ought* is universally imperative. Plato and Aristotle and Plutarch won immortality by studying the demands of conscience. Job cried, "How can a man be just [or right] with God?" Kant echoed, "What ought I to do?" The philosophers have answered with whole volumes. If we had to decide from them, we might as well give up. Let any one try to read a book on the Metaphysics of Ethics, and see where he would be if he were to choose a philosopher for his master. Jesus Christ condenses the whole duty of man into two sentences: "Love God with all your heart. Love your neighbor as yourself." Yes, but how shall I treat my neighbor? And who is he? "Do to every one what you would have him do to you. Even your so-called enemies are your neighbors. If you are no longer in doubt, do as I do; let the mind be in you that is in me."

I meditate on that answer to the world's question: "Do as you would be done by,—be to all men *Christs*"; and, looking abroad, I find class rising against class, laborer crying against capitalist, and capitalist sometimes giving good reason for the cry; I find great multitudes living in conditions which make decency and virtue impossible; I hear of the 95,000 families in Berlin with only one room for each family; I see the long procession of outcast and desolate souls drifting hither and thither like leaves blown by

autumn winds; I hear wails of human anguish and cries of terrible despair. And then I stop, and, just as calmly as is possible, ask a few questions. If all men should do as they would be done by, would these conflicts continue? If all men and women who have strength and light would be *Christs* to the outcast and desolate, could there be any without some one to save them? If competition to get the better of one another would give place to competition to help one another, would any suffer? And, some way, the impression moves in resistlessly that all we need to know about duty is just what Jesus Christ, in such simple words, taught the world for the first time.

Why do we believe in Jesus Christ? Because he has answered the world's question, What ought I to do? so clearly that a little child can understand it, so completely that the loftiest spirit can never transcend it.

But:—How can the man who has sinned be restored to the place he has lost?

This, too, is a world-old question. The consciousness of guilt is not exclusively an experience belonging to Christian lands. Pagans realize it. Not far from Keswick, in the lake district of England, are the remains of a Druidical shrine. In the center is the large stone which served as an altar. There animals were slaughtered; there, probably, human beings were offered in sacrifice. That altar testifies that the

race which inhabited Britain before it became a Roman province made the attempt to sacrifice for sin. On the slopes of the Andes, years ago, a strange and awful ceremony was celebrated. On a rude stone altar a victim was bound. Around it with uncovered heads, chanting weird music, was an assembly of worshipers ; by the side of the altar was a man with grizzled visage, and long robe reaching to his feet. The clear blue of the sky was unflecked by a cloud. The solemn mountain seemed to pierce the heavens above the heads of the worshipers. The man beside the altar approached it and lifted in the crystalline atmosphere a knife. A gasp, a gurgle, a gushing of blood, and a human being ceased to breathe. What did it mean? Some man had committed a sin which in their heathenish thought could be expiated only by the shedding of blood ; a prisoner taken in battle had been made his substitute. There was something in that sinner's breast, and in the faith of his people, which demanded satisfaction for sin. That tableau upon the mountain typifies the history of guilt. Remorse follows wrong-doing as man is followed by his shadow. It is a universal experience. There is a profound reason for the power of the confessional in the Romish Church. It practically exists in all churches. I have again and again had strong men and women confess to me sins that had been dead and buried for years; they could not get away from their past. In the Uffizzi Gallery in

Florence there is a marvelous face. In it beauty, strength, agony, are magnificent and awful. It haunts the memory. It is like the face of an insane angel. The hair grows in coils of serpents. That Medusa-head is one of the world's masterpieces. It depicts universal experience. Remorse gnaws like a serpent. When the memory is filled with recollections of evil which cannot be forgotten, the Medusa is its appropriate symbol. Those men traveling long distances with hair shirts, and with sharp nails cutting their feet, who are they? Those who have done wrong, and who are trying to make up for it by self-inflicted suffering. The consciousness of guilt is a universal experience. George Eliot pictures a man who had committed a horrible crime; his after-life was all devoted to working among the outcasts. By that he hoped to expiate the sin of his youth.

In all ages, no question has been asked more intensely than this: What can I do to escape from my guilty past? What says Jesus Christ to this inquiry? "If you so hate your past that you will turn from it and begin anew, all you need to do is to believe what I tell you, and to follow me."

What shall you do? Do nothing. Stop just where you are. You cannot get away from your past. Hair shirts, and long pilgrimages, and scourges of cactus-briers, and sacrifices, do no good. You are trying to appease God. What-

ever was needed has been done. The sacrifice has all been made. All you need to do is to believe what Jesus says, and trust him. You are not in the hands of one who is bound to get even with you at any cost. You are in your Father's hands. He is more anxious to save you than you are to be saved. Stop trying to do something, and take what he offers you as a free gift. You think something ought to be done to expiate your guilt? It has been done. The cross on Calvary bears witness to that.

The world is full of those who are crying with eager agonizing voices, How can we escape from the remorse which ever shadows us? I lift up this simple answer of Jesus, which sounds down the centuries with the music of litanies and with the inspiration of a divine voice: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And more than this: I find that simply by obeying that voice, simply by trusting and following Jesus, those who were as dead and foul as Lazarus when he had been buried four days have come forth to new, beautiful, and beneficent life. From the slums of cities, from the dungeons of prisons, from the forecastles of ships, from gambling hells and gin-palaces, from the chains and the associations of unutterable villainess, have come up a great multitude in the coronation robes of a pure and redeemed humanity; and before them, and mingling among them, is One whose form is like unto the Son of God.

Why do we believe in Jesus Christ? Because he opens a gate of escape before every human being; and because he brings to bear on human hearts the strongest possible motives to induce them to accept the eternal life which is offered to all.

The other day, a beautiful day, when the sun was soft, the skies translucent, the air loaded with fragrance, I stood with a little company of friends in our cemetery. It was a sight often seen, and yet one to which we can never become reconciled. There was the narrow grave, the long box, the thuds of falling earth, the mound, with flowers which would soon wither. How common that sight has become! What a mystery! It was a little child who died yesterday; the day before, a man; to-morrow, who will it be? And that has been going on for thousands of years. Immanuel Kant says it is the business of philosophy to answer the question, For what may I hope? And far back in the dawn of history, Job, as he pondered the problem, cried: "If a man die, shall he live again?" That is the question which will never go down. I ask it; you ask it; every one asks it. What answer do we get? Put your ear close to the earth that holds your loved one: what do you hear? Look up into the sky above his grave: what do you see? Ask the sobbing friends around you: what do they say? There is a silence broken only by the voices of certain teachers in our day

who have mustered courage to say: "We don't know; there must we leave it." Is that all? I stood by friends the other day when they said good-by to a loved one, and I said, "You are to think of that dear one as nearer than ever before; as coming into intimate spiritual contact with your spirits." Was I wrong? Ought I to have said, "We don't know"? What says Jesus Christ beside the mystery of death? Never do his words thrill with so sublime a music. Listen: "In my Father's house are many rooms." This universe is not simply space dotted with worlds held together by invisible attractions. Father's house; many rooms; dying, going from one room into another. Let not your heart be troubled; death is nothing to dread.

The disciple who wrote our text, who knew Jesus better than any other, who thought his thoughts after him, has written in majestic words about what follows death: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Death, transition; going from one room into another; being where God wipes away all tears as mothers do when their children cry; living where light is love,—this is the response of that Man of the New Testament when we ask, Does death end all?

We are now able to answer why we believe in Jesus Christ. There are voices in the souls of all men which ask imperatively and persistently certain questions. They have been pressed in all nations and in all ages. No thinking man ever lived who was not troubled by them. Their satisfactory answer will be the world's final religion. These are the answers which Jesus Christ brings to each of them: Is there a God who can sympathize with humanity? "Yes; our Father." How ought I to live? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." But suppose a man has violated his conscience and lived a life of terrible wickedness, what can he do to find peace and joy again? "Leave all your past, and follow me." But there is one more question—I almost dread to ask it. When death comes, then what? "Why, death is only a door from one room into another of our Father's house."

Now, my friends, there are times when we must cease to be formal and come close to one another and speak from heart to heart. Let me open my heart and speak to you. With you, I find myself in the midst of mystery. Back of me is darkness; before me is the grave; around me is—I know not what. I am in earnest when I ask, What am I to believe? There can be no trifling now. There is only one thing which I want, and that is—truth. It is not important that I agree with you, dearly as I love you; it is not important

that I please any one, much as I may long to do so. Only one thing is important, and that is—that, if any one can answer the questions which arise in my soul, my ears be open to hear him. I have tried to lay aside all prejudice and predilection. If Buddha answered these questions best, I would be a Buddhist. Only one voice even pretends to answer them; but that voice is sympathetic and clear and absolutely satisfactory. Jesus of Nazareth tells me that I am the child of the God of eternity; that to obey him and love my fellow-men is the sum of duty; that when I return, a penitent prodigal hating myself, I have nothing to do to win God's love,—I have only to look up and see him waiting for me with a new robe and a kiss; that when I bury my dead, and when I, too, shall have to walk alone down into the valley which seems dark, even the darkness shall be light about me as I enter into another room of my Father's house. I cannot tell you by what process I reach my conclusion, but my whole nature is satisfied with what Jesus Christ brings to me. The Son of Man becomes the Son of God.

“It is beautiful, and it would satisfy if it were only true.” If it were only true! And is it more reasonable to think that these voices of the universal human heart have *no* answer? Is it more reasonable to think that what universally satisfies is only a dream, than to think it reality? That cannot be false which the world's

heart, in its moments of loftiest exaltation, declares to be absolutely satisfying.

Jesus Christ is the key to all problems. Because he lives, I believe in the certainty of the world's conversion; because he manifests God, I can leave all the terrible mysteries of pain and sin for the dawning of the brighter light; because he is the One whom the Old Testament prophesied and whom the New Testament makes known, I believe in the Bible as divine. What has Jesus Christ in it must have come down out of heaven from God.

In the future, as in the past, I shall not be very particular to present the Jesus of the catechisms and the creeds, but I shall know no other ministry than, according to the measure of ability given, to preach the Jesus of the New Testament,—so sympathetic that little children ran into his arms; so delicate that he would not make a sinning woman blush by the gaze of his purity; so direct and faithful that Pharisees were minded to kill him; so human that on the cross he remembered his mother; so divine that he could pray even for his murderers; so full of love that he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to save those who hated him.

Jesus Christ, the ever-satisfying answer of God to the everlasting hunger of the human heart,—this has been the message of the pulpit in the past; and to proclaim the same old truth in form adapted to the circumstances and to the natures

of those who may listen in the future is all the
honor that any man need court on the earth.
After that,

“In nobler, sweeter songs
We'll sing Christ's power to save,
When these poor, lisping, stammering tongues
Lie silent in the grave.”

X.

THE LIFE, THE LIGHT OF MEN.

"Then first, perhaps, in all the ages, truth, purity, and the divine were so represented that by an irresistible enthusiasm the corruptest and the wickedest came toward him, and depravity bowed itself down and wept in the presence of divinity."

—H. W. BEECHER.

"Before Christ, we had heard of God; in Christ we have seen him."—RICHARD ROTHE.

"Love the Lord and thou shalt see him; do his will and thou shalt know

How the spirit lights the letter,—how a little child may go
Where the wise and prudent stumble,—how a heavenly glory
shines

In his acts of love and mercy, from the gospel's simplest
lines."

—W. M. L. DE WETTE.

"Marcus Aurelius and his noble masters have had no lasting effect upon the world. Marcus Aurelius left behind him delightful books, an execrable son, a transitory world. Jesus remains to humanity an inexhaustible source of moral regeneration. Philosophy is not enough for the mass. It requires sanctity."—ERNEST RENAN.

X.

THE LIFE, THE LIGHT OF MEN.

"And the life was the light of men."—*John* i. 4.

THE Gospel of John is a symphony whose theme is the Incarnation. One strain runs through it from the proem to the account of the post-resurrection ministry,—the thought of God and man one in Jesus Christ. It is not a philosophical study nor a divine vision: it is a declaration concerning the profoundest realities of spiritual life. It is the most practical of books. Naturally, it was written after the rest of the New Testament. There is no indication that Matthew, Mark, Luke, Peter, or James had very definite ideas about the divinity of Christ. Their writings hardly refer to it. It could not have been the truth most vividly impressed on their minds, or they would have given it more attention. There is evidence in the writings of Paul that he grasped more of the subject than did those who wrote before him; but he was chiefly occupied with two things,—the struggle of the spiritual and the earthly in individual experience, and the extension of the Kingdom. Distance was required for the divinity to be seen and appreciated. It was reserved for that dis-

ciple who lived longest, and who had much time for meditation "in the long evening of his life," to develop and declare, in all the majesty of his marvelous diction and the splendor of his matchless style, the superlative fact that this Man with whom he had associated, and by whom he had been inspired, was also in the beginning with God. When the words and works of our Master were seen apart from the malice and malignity of his environment, their divine character appeared. The doctrine of the Incarnation was first fully and authoritatively declared in the writings of St. John.

Our text is one strain from the prelude of this theme, in the first chapter of John. The Apostle reaches back into eternity at once: the Word was with God; He was God, in that dateless period which can only be called "beginning;" the world was made by Him. Then, as if to separate this truth from any possible identification with a physical process, he says: "In Him was life;" and reaching from the beginning to his own time, he declares: "And the life was the light of men." Yes, Christ was the divine Word; he was in the beginning with God; he was the light of men.

In all ages there has been longing for light. The symbolism of the fire-worshippers, who worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, was an expression of this universal longing. The great light naturally represented the great God, and there-

fore the sun has received adoration from millions of worshipers. The cry of the centuries was expressed in the last words of Goethe: "More light!" The Apostle John, in the midst of his sublime declaration concerning our Lord's divinity, declares that He was the light for which the world had waited. Let us consider that utterance.

What is light? A scientific definition may not be possible even yet, and it is not necessary. The first and, to us, most prominent office of light is to make other things visible; but itself is never seen. A mountain, a waterfall, a man, are seen; and yet, although light is not visible, if there is no light, nothing is seen. The real mission of Christ was not to call attention to itself, but to make it possible for men to see God; just as the mission of a telescope is not to call attention to the fineness of its case or the finish of its glass, but to bring the sun and stars within the reach of human eyes.

In all God's dealings with man, he adapts himself to man. When he would speak to men, he uses human language and speaks through men. When he wishes to reveal his truth in permanent form, he moves holy men to write our Bible. When he wishes to draw men to him, and to disclose himself in the royalty of his life, he is manifested through a human form, which lives a human life, dies, and is buried. The culmination of this principle of adaptation is in Jesus Christ.

There is nothing abstract in the Bible; it is the most picturesque and concrete of books. Its profoundest lessons are not taught in propositions. Logic can be made to prove anything; propositions can be multiplied according to ingenuity; philosophy soon gets beyond the reach of common people. Nothing is so easily comprehensible as life. Even the Sermon on the Mount is the subject of controversy; but a man who lives Christ is seen to be a Christian, even though his tongue may fail to articulate his creed. The light makes Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, the purple lakes and the fertile vineyards, visible; and the life which our Master lived makes beautiful and clear facts in the world of spirit which otherwise had remained unknown and inaccessible, like mountains at midnight.

This Life then throws light, first, on the person of the Deity. God can never be fully understood or comprehended. Those who have meditated most upon the subject have most been baffled by it. It is hard for scientific men to realize the divine Personality because they are so overwhelmed with the greatness of nature, that, when any attempt is made to rise to its Author, even imagination sinks with nerveless wing. Unrevealed, God is the abyss out of which all things visible have come. He is the Infinite, the One of whom nothing can be definitely known. The heavens declare his glory, but who he is, and how he exists, and what are his methods of operation,

are beyond the reach of thought. A few catch glimpses of him in nature, but to most he is simply the Unknown, the Unapproachable, the Infinite. Philosophy is the search for God. It has condensed the results of its search into four words:—the Absolute; the Unconditioned; the Unknowable; the Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness. When one of the greatest of modern philosophers speaks of God as the Unknowable, he honestly and fairly acknowledges that he is facing a power which he must recognize because of what is visible, but of which he can know nothing. If we turn away from revelation and simply commune with our own thoughts, we must, in view of the greatness of the universe, adopt the word "Unknowable" in place of: "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Philosophy is prostrate before the darkness; but the Life pours light on the mystery. In Jesus Christ the Unknowable is made known. All there is of God is not revealed, for such a revelation could be appreciated only by a being as great as God; but all of God that humanity needs is made known. When one enters a mine, he goes into absolute blackness; he cannot see an inch from his eyes. But the guide does not leave him in darkness. He puts into his hands a candle. By that he can find his way anywhere. It will reveal the hiding-place of the gold; it will show the ribs of the mountain; it will throw its beams full in the faces of those going with him.

It does not show him all the mazes of the mine, but all that he needs to see. The Life does not show us all there is of God, but does show us all we need to know of him for our earthly existence.

What is God like? He is like Jesus Christ. In all that our Lord was, and said, and did, we are shown God,—“the brightness of the Father’s glory.” Jesus Christ, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, went about doing good. He sought to save the lost. It was all a work of salvation. He healed diseases, thus manifesting his interest in the temporal as well as the eternal life of man. He took little children in his arms, showing that childhood was as sacred as manhood. He was considerate of the outcast, those who had fallen from virtue and respectability. He went so far as to make the first announcement of his Messiahship to a disreputable woman. He called a publican to be one of his disciples and the writer of one of his Gospels. He was careful to distinguish between the sin of arrogance and the sin of weakness, between selfishness and frailty. He denounced Pharisees to their faces, and yet simply said to the woman more sinned against than sinning: “Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.” He did not blame Peter for denying him; he simply looked at him, with a look that brought the denier to his senses. He did not make the mistake of blaming the officials who crucified him, knowing well that they were the tools of a system

which would soon fall ; he prayed for them. He wept with Mary and Martha. He manifested his power whenever he could help, but never to win praise. Just before the end of his unique career, he said : " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Let us try to translate this :—" You wonder what God is like : you see in me the answer to your question. In all his dealings with humanity, God, both in feeling and action, is to his children what I am to you. You are broken-hearted because death has robbed you of your treasures, and ask, ' Does God care for me ? ' Did you not see me weeping at the grave of Lazarus ? You have committed a terrible sin ; society shuts you out ; the world crushes you ; no one cares for you. Did not I say to the sinning woman, Go, and sin no more ? You say, ' There is no place for me in this great thrilling modern life. ' But did I not bless even the children ? Your work may be only a child's work, but it is precious to me."

One may even cry, " I have committed a crime that can never be forgiven ; life, death, eternity, are equally terrible. If I might die forever, it would be the only heaven I could ask." To such, there sounds the divine prayer on the cross : " Father, forgive them,"—they have crucified me, but forgive even them. And this is the answer of Christ to those who think there is no pardon for them.

I do not care to try to interpret that life. It is its own best interpreter. If I can only bring

home to any one, with a little more force than it had before, this one radiant fact, that God in eternity is made known in the earthly career of Jesus Christ, my ministry will be complete. The longer I live the more I see that men are hungry for God. They do not know him; they are in the dark; they are desperate and despairing; they do not know themselves, but they are hungry for God. Even as sometimes we are weary, and discouraged, and out of temper, and broken-hearted, and do not know that we hunger.

Dear friends, this is the one great message; the old story that never wears out; the music that grows sweeter with the singing; the truth that makes life worth living: that, in all our joys and sorrows, in our sins, our conflicts, our defeats, our aspirations for better things, when calamity crashes into the palace of our hopes, when we close the eyes of those dearer than life, when we go through the valley of the shadow ourselves, and throughout the eternities, we are in the hands of him who stands before us radiant and glorious in the light that is poured from the Life.

In the light of the Life, the true nature also of Christianity appears. What is it to be a Christian? The frequency with which this question is asked is a mournful testimony to the fact that, in trying to get to Christ, men have gone away from him. Christ is Christianity. If a man who had never heard of any of the religions of the world were to ask us for the most concise and definite

definition of Christianity, could any better answer be given than is seen in Christ? A man, so far as he has the life of Christ,—lives from the motives and seeks the ideals of Christ,—is a Christian.

Our Lord taught great lessons concerning duty, but all that he taught he lived. What are some of the key-words of his teaching? The first is "Father." Live as if God were your Father. Another is, "Let him that is the chiefest among you be servant of all." Another is, "He that loseth his life shall find it." Another is, "Tell others the message that I have told you; go into all the world and preach the gospel." All his teaching he gathered into two sentences: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Ye shall love one another as I have loved you." If these lessons had been only moral maxims, they would still be the loftiest ever uttered; but they would not have half their power. It is not because the moral maxims of Jesus are so much nobler than those of Socrates and Buddha that he is the world's Saviour. Much that he taught is written in the very constitution of the universe and illustrated in the processes of history. There have been in all ages elect souls who have comprehended these truths more or less clearly, but none of them have *embodied the truths in life*. That which makes Jesus unique is that his teachings are inseparable from his life. He never put into words one precept which has not a fuller and

more beautiful expression in what he did. Consequently Christ is Christianity. To understand the system, we can only study it in the light of the Life; it cannot be understood apart from that.

Jesus lived in daily intercourse with his Father. When a boy, he said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" When he was dying, he said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." With him, the invisible was not impersonal and unknowable; the unseen powers were the personal Father. His whole career was one of service. He was the Lord of glory, and yet he healed diseases, fed the hungry, washed the disciples' feet. He was servant of all. And his followers must follow in his footsteps. Honors are for the world. Applause, offices, public honors, are for self-seekers. Christ never sought anything for himself but the opportunity to do good. He was the servant of those who were too poor to pay wages and too wicked to appreciate sacrifice. Who are the Christians to-day? Those who are violently defending dogmas they do not understand, or those who, without self-exaltation, are ministering to the weak and the poor? "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is truly the Golden Rule; and, if anything more precious than gold is ever found, let us give it that name. But what are the words compared with the Life? He was abused, misrepresented, treated like a dog, and yet there is not a single

instance recorded, in which he allowed it to make the slightest difference in his treatment of others. He always did for them according to their needs and not according to what they gave him. They reviled him; he blessed them. They followed him out of curiosity; he fed them when they were hungry. They spit upon him, whipped him until his back was raw and bleeding; and he, looking beyond the passions of the moment and discerning souls to be saved, prayed for their forgiveness. The only true place to study the Golden Rule is beside the cross. Christ, dying to save those who hated him, condenses the Golden Rule. For think: if we are in the hands of One who sees that we are deceiving ourselves and being impelled by passion instead of guided by principle, do we not wish that that One should do by us according to his wisdom, and not according to our blindness? He was the living Golden Rule.

And so we might consider his sayings one by one. All were alive in him. His presence preached the Gospel wherever he went. The music was always keyed to the two notes of Fatherhood and Brotherhood; it was condensed in one word—Love: love to God the Father, love to man the brother. “As I have loved you.” Who shall measure that love! Death is the only word that hints at its reach, and that points to depths unutterable. What is Christianity? The creed of a church,—Congregational, Presbyterian, Episco-

palian, Roman Catholic? No, these are only dry bones. Where shall we take the inquirer who really wants to know what Christianity is? To the ecclesiastical assemblies where multitudes are competing for offices and fame? To the tribunals where poor, puny, egotistical men are arraigning one another because the pure light of God does not look the same when it shines through glasses of different colors? No: these workers may be very earnest, but for some reason they do not look like Christ and will not help our inquirer. Let us take him into the presence of the Life, let us show him the One who, from first to last, never sought an honor, never asked for a vote, never was on a committee; who, wherever he went, was searching eagerly and constantly for those whom he could help; who never asked appreciation; who did his best work for those who abused him most; who never judged men by their moods but always by their needs; who had sympathy for the sorrowing, food for the starving, help for the fainting, hope for the despairing; who asked no pay for anything he did; who was so in earnest that, when it came to the question, "Shall I continue this work and die, or give it up?" he hesitated not a moment, but welcomed death if he could give life to the perishing. There will we take our inquirer, and say: Turn away from the best of us, disciples; we are as weak as you are; we are selfish; we often mistake passion for principle. Look to him who not only teaches Christianity,

but who *is* Christianity. That is the life for which we are striving. Judge Christianity by what it is seen to be in the light of that Life.

In the Life is seen, too, the Kingdom of God. Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is among you." The people did not understand that he was that Kingdom, and that, wherever he went, it had existence and power. And yet that was what he meant. He said the Kingdom should grow like the mustard seed and like the leaven, that at last it should fill the earth. What he meant by the Kingdom has been the subject of endless discussion. It has been interpreted as a principle of sovereignty—as a literal empire which should endure for a thousand years. There is, however, a simpler and more credible explanation: He was the Kingdom. As men received the inspiration of his life, it was within them; as they became one with him, it was extended. It is larger to-day than ever; it will fill the earth simply because it is life. It is not possible that His sway should not some time fill the earth, because men cannot realize that for which they were made without becoming like him. He is the goal of humanity. He realizes that which is best in men; that which is best must some time conquer that which is worst. In individuals this principle may seem to fail, but it does not fail when applied to the race. And when his Kingdom has come, then what? All men will be like Christ,—swayed by the same motives, working toward the same ends, looking toward the same Father. What a glory halos the thought that

some time the whole creation which has been groaning in pain will become the abode of that Humanity which at last realizes the end for which it was created, and will become, not simply in individuals, but corporately, the very temple of God! This is what the Life prophesies; this is what the Life is. When the Kingdom prevails, all men will be what Christ is; and the dream of Isaiah, which in those barbaric times must have seemed like the hallucination of lunacy, will be no more a dream:—there shall be none to hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. This is the prayer we offer when we pray, "Thy kingdom come;" we ask for the hastening of the day in which all men shall be one with Christ as he is one with God. That day is far off, no doubt; but what is time, as we measure it, to Him who inhabits eternity? A day of our life would be an eternity to the tiny creatures whose existence is completed in a moment. A day of God's time may seem eternity to us. That which appears to be so far away as to be impossible to you and me may be on the verge of accomplishment with him to whom a thousand years is as a day. But whether near or far, he is the Kingdom of God. When we see him ministering to the sick, feeding the hungry, weeping with the sorrowing, dying a ransom for the sinning, we see what men will have become when the Kingdom fills the earth. The vision overwhelms with its splendor! A world with all like Christ—it is surely coming! The Life is the light in which its glory is manifested.

The Life is the light of men. Light is that which makes all things visible. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. In him we see what must otherwise have been an inscrutable mystery—the nature of God, made so plain that a little child can pray “Our Father”; he is Christianity, and those who see him see it; in him the future kingdom of God stands before our eyes, with a splendor as distinct as that of Mont Blanc to those who look upon it when its fields of glittering white are bathed in sunlight from a cloudless sky.

Contact with life inspires life. A candle touched by a flame is always lighted. If our lives are barren and dead, let us put them into contact with the Life that cannot die; if our minds are dark and we walk in a universe of blackness, let us bring the little candles of our thought where the light of the Life can touch them, and they will blaze with a light sufficient for our need.

The sum of the whole matter is this: If you want to know about God, you might as well try to explore the midnight by looking at it as by searching to find him out. See him in Christ. If you want to know what Christianity is, turn from all books and creeds and systems of thought, good and helpful as these may be, and see Christianity in Christ. If you want to know what the Kingdom is which is to fill the earth, you may learn by becoming acquainted with Christ. His Life is the light of men.

XI.

THE INVISIBLE REALM.

"The foundations of a faith in a future life lie outside of Revelation, and ought, therefore, to be disclosed independently of it. . . . It is immortality which gives promise of Revelation, not Revelation which lays in our own constitution and in the government of God the foundations of immortality."—JOHN BASCOM, D.D.

"So Life must live, and Soul must sail,
And Unseen over Seen prevail;
And all God's argosies come to shore,
Let ocean smile, or rage, or roar."
—D. A. WASSON.

"We bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the King's,
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier." ANON.

"If mind is extinguished on the dissolution of the body, it is the only force known to us as being absolutely annihilated."
—JAMES MCCOSH, D.D.

"But as we are conscious that we are endued with capacities of perception and of action, and are living persons; what we are to go upon is, that we shall continue so till we foresee some accident, or event, which will endanger those capacities, or be likely to destroy us; which death does in no wise appear to be. . . . When we go out of this world, we may pass into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present."—BISHOP BUTLER.

"How we rejoice, at the close of a long life, to think that we shall soon enter upon an entirely new career!"—RICHARD ROTHE.

XI.

THE INVISIBLE REALM.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption."—*Cor. xv. 53.*

MEN are always most impressed by their troubles. A little darkness will obscure the sun. Sorrows make faith difficult. Death leaves a deeper impression than life. Although it is often the swiftest of experiences, one which is over in an instant, yet it always startles. It will surprise to-morrow as it did yesterday. Civilization has made death more dreaded. In rude ages people threw away life; in cultured times they hold it sacred. Each man, as he comes to maturity, faces this mystery as eagerly as if no one had ever questioned it before. It is as new to us as it was to Job; it will be as new to our children's children as to us. What must death have been to the first person who ever saw its effects! If no one had ever died, and our best beloved should cease to breathe, what havoc would be worked in thought! We think about these things, talk about them, shrink from them; but the dark curtain which shuts us in never parts. Lazarus revealed no secrets. No traveler from the unseen has reached our shores. And so it comes to pass that, on this Easter day

in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-eight of the Christian era, men are, of themselves, as blind and yet as anxious to see as they have ever been.

But we are not left to ourselves. We are disciples of One whose whole ministry hinged on his revelation of the reality beyond death. We gather to-day with great hope. We have buried our dead, and our hearts have reached out into the unseen and been strong. We front the eternal mystery with submission and with something of longing, because he has taught us that the universe is our Father's house, and that death is only a door into another room of that house. This is a subject upon which we naturally and properly crave all the light we can get. When the most trustful have listened to the words of the Master, they ask:—And are there any other voices on the subject? If we think of the Bible as from God, and the constitution of the human soul and the universe itself as belonging to the devil, then we must study only the Bible; but, if we recognize that the constitution of the soul is from God, and that the universe in every part is also and truly a revelation of him, then we shall with equal earnestness study the testimony of these also. The divine revelation is in three volumes. All have much to say on the subject, and each corroborates the teaching of the others.

The Apostle speaks positively and gloriously concerning the unseen. Death is the gate into a

realm which disease never invades. "The last enemy which shall be abolished is death." "This mortal must put on immortality." "This corruptible must put on incorruption." These physical bodies are not to be re-animated; for St. Paul expressly says: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." The physical body can have no place in an immaterial state; but, on the other hand, it is impossible to think of existence without form. Therefore we are told: "There is a spiritual body"—a form through which each individual expresses himself forever. Words are the bodies of thoughts, and exist in our minds before we speak. The thought unexpressed in the mind has a spiritual body; when it is voiced, it has a natural body. A personality cannot be imagined except in form. The form in which it will be clothed hereafter is its spiritual body. The spiritual word is manifest through the spoken word; and so the spiritual body manifests itself through the physical form to beings who are dependent on senses.

But consider: Suppose you and I had the power to read thoughts: suppose we were not dependent upon our senses. We are sitting with a friend who thinks certain lines of Tennyson. He does not speak the words, but they exist in thought; and, as we have the power of reading thought, we know what the man's spirit is saying.

Take the sense of seeing. The real man is not the body. The body does nothing. If the unseen man is in one mood, the body will do one thing, and, if in another mood, something else. You may sit by a man all day and see his body every moment, and still not know what he is thinking, whom he is loving, and what he is purposing. When, however, the unseen man chooses, he can manifest himself through his body, and what the body does can be seen. Let us suppose that you have a sense so keen that you do not need physical manifestation of others' moods: would you not still see a form? It would be a man angry, a man loving, a man choosing. Anger, apart from a person, has no existence. When the Apostle says, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption" he only means that before death men are compelled to use a decaying physical body to express themselves; but that when death has done its work, the man is free from all that decays,—he can be himself. He will still have a body, for form is necessary to existence. But he will not need to speak words as we do now, for spirit can take knowledge of spirit; and his body will not be made of stuff that decays, but will be the man thinking, loving, choosing, independent of voice and flesh. This teaching of the Apostle harmonizes with what is known of man in his spiritual nature. The spiritual nature is as real and demonstrable as the physical. Just here, however,

arises a question which it is the main purpose of this sermon to answer :

Is there any reason, apart from the Bible, for belief in an unseen universe where the spirit within us can continue to exist? We recognize the spiritual in ourselves,—that the real power in us is something which uses the body and is not used by it: now, if that power ever gets out of the body, is there any place for it?

The visible universe had a beginning. There may be a question as to whether matter was created out of nothing; but science and the Bible agree that there was a time when the present universe had no existence. "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness dwelt upon the face of the deep." Of that timeless period before creation, who knows anything? And yet it is distinctly indicated. Once chaos reigned—darkness on the face of the deep. How long the universe has been in its present form, few speculate; but all reputable thinkers agree that its present perfection is the result of a long process, and that the time once was when, instead of our sun and the attendant planets,—perhaps instead of all the stars and suns,—there was "a diffused or chaotic state in which the various particles were widely separated from one another, but exerting on one another gravitating force, and therefore possessed of potential energy."* The

* "The Unseen Universe," pp. 163-4.

Bible speaks of a time when the earth was without form ; science speaks of the time when the visible universe was formless, diffused like vapor. It is not for us to enter into any discussion of this subject. Definite thoughts are impossible upon certain themes. It is enough to know that both revelation and human investigation point toward a time when all that is visible was invisible. How it became visible may never be known ; but out of the one came the other. The invisible was a palace of light, so vast that no one ever dreamed how large it was, so bright that no eye could gaze upon it, so high that its summit was lost, so deep that its foundations could never be discovered. Of that palace only one thing is known. Some time before eye of mortal was opened to sight its doors were unbarred, and out through them came what now is visible—the earth, the planets, the fixed stars ; out of the palace of the unseen came the substances which have their present form. The previous state of all things must have been as real as their present state, the unseen as real as the seen. What forces dwelt in that eternity, who can tell ? This, however, the blindest can see : there must have been intelligence, and will, and love,—there must have been life in some form, or else there would be no life here. Life cannot come from death, although it can survive it. We go backward with our Bible in one hand and Science in the other. Both lead to a time when the present

order began; both to the insufferable light in which all things are invisible; both to the necessary thought that, as there are life, will, love, thought, here, there must have been life, will, love, thought, there. In other words, things which are seen tell of an unseen universe in the past out of which the present issued, and in which all that distinguishes humanity, except the physical body, had existence. This opens a wide door; it shows us, when we stand dumb by the graves of our loved ones and wonder whether the spirit can exist apart from the body, that in the beginning, before any physical universe existed, life, spirit, love, thought—all that distinguishes personality—must have been as real as to-day.

Holy Scripture points not only to a beginning, but to an end of the present order. Science points in the same direction. "The earth will gradually lose its energy of rotation, as well as that of revolution, around the sun. The sun itself will wax dim and become useless as a source of energy, until at last the favorable conditions of the present solar system will have quite disappeared. But what happens to our system will happen likewise to the whole visible universe, which will, if finite, become in time a lifeless mass, if indeed it be not doomed to utter dissolution. In fine, it will become old and effete no less truly than the individual—it is a glorious garment, this visible universe, but not an immor-

tal one—we must look elsewhere if we are to be “clothed with immortality as with a garment.”* The visible universe is to fade from sight, all that it contains of beauty of form and splendor of color is to disappear. Some time it will sail in the ether, a cold and desolate mass, until new transformation occurs; perhaps until it is drawn into collision with some other mass, when the force of colliding will cause a new conflagration and the words of Scripture be verified: “The elements shall melt with fervent heat.”

When our eyes are turned toward that future, we face the fact that nothing is ever destroyed. The melting of the elements will be only a change of form. Conservation of energy is a recognized law. The form of matter will change—the energy will simply exist in other forms. There is no more reason to think that life and all that constitutes personality will have ceased when the universe is once more without form, than to think that they had no existence in the beginning. All visible things are gradually moving toward the unseen. Some time the systems will no more swing in space; the elements will have melted, and possibly the reign of ancient chaos will be resumed. Toward that palace of light all things are tending, and by and by they will disappear in the insufferable brightness.

But life, love, thought, and will were in the

* “The Unseen Universe,” p. 196.

earlier palace—why not in the later? We can only inquire: we do not know. But we have great longings. At the door of this palace all the generations have knocked. Mothers have seen their babes go into it, and have cried, “Do they still live?” Husbands have parted from wives, wives from husbands, and friend from friend; and no one ever went into it who did not leave behind some one listening at the door, in the hope that he might catch the rustling of a robe, or the echo of a voice. To the palace which each one enters at death, all things visible are hurrying. What is it? A void, a vacancy, a non-entity? Science says there is no void; the invisible is never empty; in the elder chaos, intelligence and will had their abode. But here science ceases to speak, and the voice that now sounds through the silence is that of the Author of Christianity. It is the only voice. Longings are everywhere, but there is only one answer. It is the answer of Him who, having died as others die, made his spiritual body evident to those who were usually able to see only physical things. He said: “In my Father’s house are many mansions,”—that is, in the universe of God there is not only the visible but the invisible also,—“if it were not so, I would have told you.” The vision given to the beloved disciple was of things unseen by fleshly eyes, and is chiefly a revelation by negatives. There shall be no pain there, no hunger, no sin, no weariness, no death, no tears, nothing

that flesh is heir to. Thus again the Book and Science are in agreement,—or rather the Book takes up the strain where Science is compelled to drop it; and as we read, there sweep in upon us hints of a sublimer harmony in which are songs and harpers harping, and voices as of many waters, and great and marvelous music. The universal human heart longs, with inappeasable longings, to know what lies in the region beyond the grave. Science answers: I do not know; I only know that there is no vacancy anywhere, that no littlest energy can ever be destroyed; it may be transformed, but it can never be lost. I do not know what lies beyond, but I do know that life, love, thought, and will must have existed in the unseen universe from which all things seen have issued, and there is not the slightest evidence for thinking that they will cease in the unseen to which we are hastening. Having found that the unseen has been and must be a state in which energy exists, in which life, love, thought, and will have existed and presumptively will continue, we are at last ready to listen to the voice which harmonizes with all that is known of human longing and human experience and with the universe itself: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Another question haunts our thought. Is everything that exists visible to physical eyes, or is there now all about us an unseen universe?

Was this palace of light destroyed when all that could be made visible to humanity issued into bodily expression? That the things seen came from the unseen is evident enough; but did all that existed come into expression; or may we think that now, coincident with everything seen, there is another kingdom in which, to mortals, everything is unseen? Have you never, in the silence of your own thought, wondered whether there might not be invisible eyes looking upon you? Have you not sometimes thought that influences came to you which were not of earth, and yet were not directly from God? "My mother has seemed nearer to me since she died than she ever did in life," were words spoken by one whose memory is sacred to me. "We both realized that we were nearer to each other than we had ever been before," was the utterance of a strong, thoughtful man who had seen eyes that were dear to him close forever. Have you never had some such experience? At least have you not often wondered whether there might not be beings in the air whose existence was as real as yours, but whom you could not see? These inquiries force the question, Is the unseen universe a present reality? To this there are various answers, only a few of which can be given.

There is the answer of Science. "We are thus led to believe that there exists now an invisible order of things intimately connected with the present, and capable of acting energetically

upon it ; for, in truth, the energy of the present system is to be looked upon as originally derived from the invisible universe, while the forces which give rise to transmutations of energy probably take their origin in the same region."* In other words, while we go backward to find whence energy and physical form first issued, we cannot help noticing that things are constantly changing and that the causes of the changes elude us. Where does the force come from which works change now ?

An illustration is that of the organ of memory. Physiologists tell us that each specific thought denotes some specific waste of brain-matter, so that there is a mysterious and obscure connection between the nature of the thought and that of the waste which it occasions. "In like manner memory is looked upon as dependent upon traces left behind in the brain, of the state in which it was when the sensation remembered took place."† You cannot think a thought without that invisible, intangible something making an impression on the matter of the body. That is, the invisible and spiritual can affect even matter as much as if we were to say—as we do—that a thought strikes us. And thought, whatever it is, is started in the unseen ; it affects both the unseen which thinks and the seen which acts. Thus the simple fact of memory is an illustration of the

* "The Unseen Universe," p. 199. † *Ibid.*, p. p. 77, 78.

material world influenced and changed by the spiritual.

But changes are constantly in progress. In the limits of a sermon they can neither be traced nor illustrated. Suffice it to say that "what we are driven to is not an under-life resident in the atom, but a divine over-life in which we live and move and have our being." * The forces which cause the changes in the universe,—whence are they? All from the unseen. There is, beyond sight, a realm in which activity is possible now, a realm from which issue the orders which all visible things obey. What it is we are not told, but that it exists we can have no doubt.

When to the above is added different evidence, the conviction is immeasurably stronger. As we study history, we are conscious that occasionally there have been great irruptions of power which have caused changes in thought and conduct so vast as to be called revolutions. Men are substantially alike in all ages; subject to the same influences, the same diseases, living in the same surroundings. But suddenly a few in one generation are lifted as great ships are lifted by unseen tides, and are rolled far onward and upward on the stream of events. What is it? The effect of power may be called an Exodus, like that which took the Israelites from Egypt; an Advent, like the coming of Jesus Christ; a Renais-

* "The Unseen Universe," p. 245.

sance, like that of the Middle Ages; a Reformation, like that which Luther led; or a great religious revival which sweeps over a whole nation without warning, and leads men to live as in the presence of their King. The name is nothing. The fact is that the unseen has opened its doors; from somewhere beyond natural causes there have rushed in influences and forces purely spiritual, moving men to daring deeds as they were moved in the Crusades; leading them to self-sacrifice, as missionaries have been led; inciting them to revolutions, as those were inspired who laid the foundations of liberty on our shores. These tides of influence, coming suddenly, doing marvelous things, lifting individuals, communities, and States to higher thinking and nobler living—whence are they? All from the unseen. That revival and that revolution have lines running from them to the unseen universe; along those lines thrill inspirations which change the currents of history and sometimes transform even the face of nature. They are outside the limits of physical causation, but are as evident as rocks and lakes. Yesterday they were not; to-day they are; to-morrow the world will be changed. They are all timed in the interests of progress. They find a natural lodgment in human hearts; they all point toward a realm above that which is visible.

The student of nature and of history has laid his message at our feet and told us that both

have spoken to him of a sphere above the physical, which moulds it but which is independent of it; a realm from which issue influences that take hold of love and will and thought. This is what we have been seeking. If we could only be sure that not all things are physical and subject to physical laws, we might believe that that in us which lives and loves and thinks and wills is independent of the body which seems to imprison it.

And just here chimes in the music of revelation. Listen to these passages: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? . . . And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

Thus, then, science, history, experience, the Bible, all point toward the unseen universe as existing in the present and influencing the present. If our eyes could only be opened like those of the servant of Elisha, we might see that horses and chariots of fire are guarding many a poor

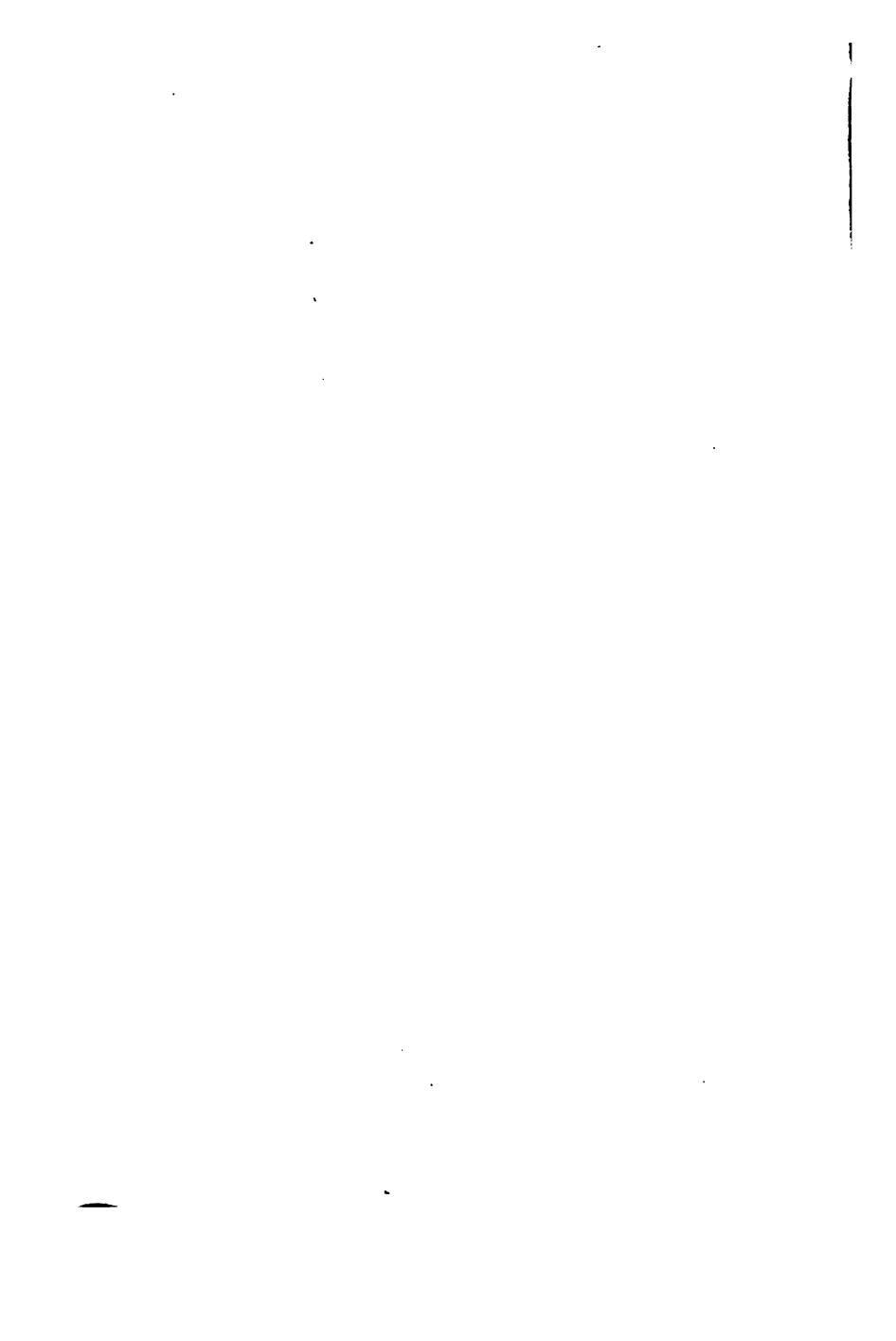
man's household, and fighting for many a tempted man in his struggle with evil.

As we look backward, all things issue from the unseen which must have been as real as the present order,—a realm of life, thought, love, and will, since all these exist now and we cannot think of them as self-originating. We look toward the future when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and find that that catastrophe cannot be annihilation, but only change of form; that the energy which has been will be; and we find also no reason to think that life, thought, will, and love will cease, for they existed in the former chaos, and why not in the later? We look around us and find that even the physical world is changed by forces which reach out of sight, and that history has, all along, been subject to irruptions of power which have stimulated love and thought and will; and therefore we know that the unseen universe, the palace of light, is as real to-day as before the foundations of the world were laid. To all this is added the sure word of Revelation, confirming, at every point, what has been learned from the study of nature and of history.

These facts harmonize with the deathless hunger of humanity. If life apart from the body is now, always has been, and always shall be, it is at least a little easier to believe that, for us, dying is only laying aside the poor garments which have so long hampered and hidden the immortal spirit.

O, how we long to draw aside the veil ! O, if we could only catch one little glimpse ! But the veil is never rifted, and beyond it our dear ones have gone, and toward it we are hastening with a swift-ness that is startling.

What can we do? Certain things we can do. We can study God's works and his Word, and gather all the knowledge possible; we can live lives that shall be fit to survive death; we can trust the only One who claims to have come into the visible from the unseen universe, when he says: "Because I live, ye shall live also." And one thing more: we can keep so pure and peaceful that if ever it should happen that one of the shining ones from out the palace of light should come to you or to me, he would find our spirits waiting for the fulfillment of the Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."



XII.

THE ENDLESS GROWTH.

“ Mere orthodoxy is deadly heresy. The purely intellectual unity reached through a purely intellectual assent is no operation of the Spirit: but where the Spirit is not, life is not; and where life is not, death is.”—ROBERT FLINT, D.D., LL.D.

“ The greatest things, the most vital, do not lie within the scope of our powers, yet, as they belong to us, they may be confidently awaited.”—THEODORE T. MUNGER, D.D.

“ Though you may accelerate growth, you cannot anticipate the after-products before the intermediate steps have been taken. Men desire to be like Paul in the culmination of his experiences, but they do not want to be like him in the detached steps by which he came to these experiences. Men want to be deep, but they do not want God to dig the well. In God's house there are many things, yet there is an order that belongs to those things and that order cannot be changed.”—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

“ Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.”—TENNYSON.

“ Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea !”
—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

XII.

THE ENDLESS GROWTH.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—*John* x. 10.

IT is the sage remark of John Ruskin that about nothing is the average man so ignorant as of the world around him. Consequently, when he sees a true representation of a tree, or of a nook in a meadow, or a sweeping vista of radiant sky, it often seems to be untrue to nature. Many people apparently live in the Bible and yet are ignorant of its simplest statements. In their youth and enthusiasm they caught certain phrases of interpretation, were impressed by certain sermons or men, and ever afterward have carried those partial and crude conceptions of truth into the Bible and made it bend to them. How often we hear the expression, "That is not the way I was taught," implying that the good man or woman who taught years ago was infallible. It is quite as possible that error was taught when we were young, as that it is to-day, and it is sure that men were then no more consecrated and anxious to know the truth than they are now. Many take the conceptions formed when they were young and not qualified to weigh opin-

ion, and forever after interpret the whole Word of God by some partial ideas, which lingered in memory because they happened to make a vivid impression on their minds when first heard.

How many persons who walk through a forest know the individuality of the trees, the special homes of the flowers, the peculiar notes of the birds?

Some things with which we are best acquainted we know least. And the Bible is like the universe with its deep heavens shining with stars, with its forests of variegated trees and plants, with its choirs of singing birds, and its broad expanse of rippling waters. Familiarity with the words of the Bible sometimes makes men impervious to its meaning. Take for an illustration the word "life." It is one of the great words of the New Testament. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." And so the changes are rung on this one word. Properly understood "life" settles many questions, but its essential significance must be learned in order to know its bearing on opinion and conduct. A word may be in the New Testament and yet mean no more to the mind than a bird in a tree means to a man thinking of stocks and real estate. Life! What is it? It is something that must effect growth or cease to exist. It cannot remain stationary. Only death makes no progress. Jesus

came that we might have life,—that is, might grow.

Again, life necessitates diversity. How diversified is the face of nature! It is the product of the one energy which proceeds from the sun; but it runs in the deer, roars in the lion, blossoms in trees, beautifies gardens, and makes possible the physical existence of man. No two things alive are exactly alike. Dr. Clifford, in his recent address delivered upon taking the chair at the meeting of the Baptist Union in London, expressed the truth in epigrammatic words: "The living differ; it is the dead who agree." Life always and ineffably works diversity.

It also organizes its own body. The life in the acorn draws out of the earth, the air, the sunshine, and the rain, that which it organizes into a tree. Throughout the universe, life organizes its own body. In what form life shall grow, no one can determine. Take a bulb of lily-of-the-valley and say to it: I want all the flowers in my garden to be roses, and you must grow and bear roses. And what will be the effect? There will be no answer; but as soon as the suns have become warm, the broad green leaf and the dainty white flower will rise before your eyes totally independent of your order. Life tolerates no dictation. Dead things may be moulded, but life never. "I have come to give you the very life that is in me," the Master said. Do not think that you can compel it to do your

bidding. If you cannot compel a lily-of-the-valley, you cannot expect to control the life of God. Let it grow. When our Lord said that he came to give life, he did not change or qualify the meaning of the word. It is something which grows, which grows into diversified form, and which manifests itself in such a body as it may select for itself. Our study to-day is devoted to this one characteristic of spiritual life:—It must grow, until it begins to die; if it never dies, it must eternally grow. How do we know this?

Spiritual life manifests itself by growth in knowledge. Only a small part of the physical universe is yet known. Since the beginnings of science, there has been constant advancement. Each discovery has stimulated farther investigation, but the wonderful inventions and discoveries of the past sometimes obscure the reality and extent of human ignorance. Investigation has only begun. Not one of the fundamental inquiries has yielded its secret. Concerning the origin of life and of language we are no wiser than our fathers. The most daring explorers in the realm of science have only been like farmers who now and then turn up curiosities as they plow the surface of the ground, not like miners who find gold in the depths of the earth. If there is this limitation in the knowledge of physical things, much more is it to be expected in the spiritual sphere. Indeed, it is probable that the

search for the causes of physical things will never be successful until they are sought in the realm of spirit. But there is as yet little knowledge of anything spiritual. Nothing is known of the nature of spirit; there are few clear ideas about it, except in the minds of those who have given it their lives. Little is known about God. The answer of the Catechism to the question, "What is God?" is a confession of ignorance. And yet each day we are dealing with this most stupendous reality. We are attempting to regulate the time piece of our lives by the Sun which shines in eternity. Nothing is known of God, apart from revelation, except that he is powerful and wise. Beyond this, the most that can be said is that he seems sometimes good and sometimes evil. He sends light and gladness: he also sends pestilence and misery. What is known of man? Hardly more than of God. The mysteries of thought, of will, of affection, are untouched. Is the body the man, or does he inhabit the body? Will the man continue to exist when the body decays? If so, in what form will he appear? What powers will he have? Where will he be? And so questions might be multiplied. "But we have revelation." Yes; and let nothing obscure that supreme fact. But when we ask ourselves, How much is revealed? the answer can be hardly more than this—All that we need, to live by. And those of us who most gladly accept revelation are most

overwhelmed by the problems which clamor for solution.

A man has been taught to believe in God, and does believe in him. Suddenly the home is broken, his wife dies, his wealth goes, and at middle-age everything is in ruins. A person, impotent to understand how such things can be and God yet be good, is no uncommon spectacle. We are conscious that we are free; that we can choose for ourselves; that no power in heaven or hell can compel our wills; and yet that consciousness is hedged about with facts equally evident. The man who knows that he is free knows also that he is a bundle of tendencies which have come from his ancestors, knows that he has the appetite which his father had, that he has the weakness which was in his mother; he sees that he has been put where he is by unseen powers; that he had no choice in his parentage, no option as to time or place of birth, no voice in choosing his environment. There seems to be an eternal enmity between these facts. And yet both are facts. But where is the harmony? That is in the unseen.

These questions are sufficient for illustration. They might be indefinitely multiplied. They will arise, and it is the sheerest absurdity to expect that they can be suppressed. God has arranged things to stimulate thought. He means that we shall gain wisdom by growth. The surest way to make infidels is to tell an intelli-

gent person that he should not ask such questions. They may not be answered, but they cannot be suppressed without death. An acorn may be suppressed, but there will then be no tree. An inquirer may say: "Everything is in confusion; these questions point toward absolute darkness and therefore they are of no importance to me." Or he may deny everything and say, "There can be no God, no goodness, no life beyond, no reconciliation between freedom and necessity, no way of escape from the power of evil." Or he may follow the course suggested by the analogy of life. Life necessitates growth. These questions reach into the invisible. We learn by growing. Men know more than their children. The children of each new generation begin in advance of those who preceded them. These subjects are the endless study. We know but little, but revelation has assured us that eternity is ours. The things which are not seen are eternal. If now we once grasp the idea of endless life, we have also the necessity of endless growth, and endless growth carries with it endless increase in knowledge. This stage of existence is largely occupied by the contest between the physical and spiritual. It is enough to know that the spiritual will surely triumph, that God is, and that eternity is ours. But what about God? Let us keep on inquiring, reading our Bibles, interrogating nature, studying history; the knowledge will come as rapidly as we are

prepared for it. As each new century brings new disclosures of the glory of the physical universe, so each new stage in our existence will bring some new advance in spiritual things. This ought to be expected. The interpretations of childhood and youth are never final; they are valuable as stepping-stones to wider outlooks and truer visions. The knowledge of a man ought to be to his knowledge when a youth, as an elm-tree to a sapling. When a man says, "I stand to-day just where I did twenty years ago," there are only two conclusions possible: either he was perfect then, or he is dead now.

What a vista is opened by this thought of endless growth in knowledge—forever finding out something more of God, forever finding some new meaning in the mystery of his love, forever learning how to reconcile the individual with his constantly-changing environment! What a terrible world this must have been before the creation was complete, when molten masses fell upon the earth in fiery rain, when there was neither day nor night, but only desolation and infinite and eternal confusion. But that was a necessary stage in the development of the universe; and the "soaring and radiant mountains," the variegated forests, the emerald meadows, the gardens rich with flowers, "the valleys in which kingdoms nestle," the evening sky reflecting soft splendors, are only parts of another stage in the development of the same world. So, out of the

confusion of thought, a day will come when knowledge shall have grown, when the revelation which is now only in part shall be increased, when we shall see no more through a glass darkly, when the light of eternity shall rest on what is now in shadow. Endless growth in knowledge! Let us not be in haste; God will disclose himself as fast as man is able to receive him. The largest revelation is always to the most spiritual. As power to receive and to appreciate increases, the depths will give up their secrets; and this will go on forever, for the finite will always find something to learn about the infinite. None need be troubled because they are not where they were yesterday in knowledge, because they have had to lay aside what once was sacred. The oak must lay aside the acorn-shell, if it would grow. But let that man be afraid, who for one moment finds himself inclined to relax the feeling of obligation to obey the truth as fast as it shall be made known, or willing to rest in what has already been received. "Grow in grace and in knowledge," is the apostle's exhortation. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God," are the words of our Master. Eternity will not be too long for man to learn about God.

Spiritual life manifests itself in increasing power to endure and to do. Ability to endure is a plant of slow growth. Many distrust themselves and doubt their faith because they are able to meet

the experiences of life with so little fortitude. They forget that ability to endure is one of the last and finest fruits of the divine life. They have also failed to observe that the richest gifts of Providence are not given outright, but gradually. God gives wisdom to those who ask, but he gives it in the only way it is ever given, by a process of experience. Knowledge may be flashed on the mind, but wisdom cannot come suddenly. Patience in the midst of sorrow and calamity is slowly developed. He who has pain and disappointment repeated, and yet is untroubled by them, must have a shallow nature. In proportion as he has loved must a man mourn for those he loses, until he has learned that even death may be gain. God may make a revelation as the result of a process just as truly as by a flash of light. His method of teaching courage and fortitude is by allowing his children to grow into the wisdom and strength which they need. The most patient and heroic spirits have learned endurance by enduring. Trees become strong by being beaten upon by tempests. The Sequoias do not grow in valleys, but on mountains where the storms of three thousand years have buffeted them. Soldiers are seldom brave in their first battle. When they have become accustomed to the roar of guns and the sights of death, they will dare anything. The brave and patient are seldom the young. Youth is often careless, and with it

heedlessness sometimes passes for courage ; but those who can look calamity in the face and calmly wait for it, have grown strong through experience. That woman whom you envy so much, who is quiet and patient and keeps such a beautiful trust, do you know her history? She is not very young. Long ago she had a friend dear to her as her own life : one was taken, and the other left. She idolized her father : one day he went away without a good-by, and has never come back. She and her mother were inseparable, until, without warning, that companionship was broken. She had a home of her own, and her broken heart was mended by new loves ; the shadows had almost disappeared when again, and again, and again the raven wing darkened her household. And to-day she is alone. Every one loves her, she is interested in all good things, many have already learned to call her blessed : and yet she is every now and then compelled to listen to such words as these : "If I only had such a disposition as you have, then I should not suffer as I do ; you cannot imagine how lonely I am." That woman could reply, if she would : "My dear friend, I have been just where you are ; I know what it is to fight God ; I know what it is to beat my wings against the bars of my cage ; I have just the same kind of nature that you have. I was not always as you see me ; by trusting God in dark hours, I have grown to know that he does all things well." That woman

who inspires by her courage is as truly a growth as the tree in the garden which is glorious to-day with its coloring of blossoms, and which will bend to-morrow beneath its burden of fruit. Life grows.

The positive virtues are the result of growth. One very rich man once said to another: "I wish I knew how to give as you do. Why, it seems to make you happy to give money; but, some way, I don't know how to do it." He did not know how, but such men must learn. The life of Christ growing in a man's heart will some time compel him to empty his pocket. Christ was generous. His message and ministry alike express love which manifests itself at cost. He gave himself for humanity. Those who become like him sooner or later become one with him. The result is inevitable. Wherever Christ's life is, it must grow; and, perhaps by painful processes, perhaps by causing great losses, it will compel generosity. Many at the beginning of the spiritual life, and sometimes long afterward, are like the soil into which a seed has fallen. Poor, stupid dirt! does it think it can remain the same when that seed begins to grow and to make the garden beautiful? No; the earth must help toward the growth with its riches; and the quicker the lesson is learned, the better.

Regard for the opinions of others is a growth. The young are usually narrow, and the elderly tolerant. It requires time to learn that all

wisdom, intelligence, and consecration were not condensed in the little valley where we were born and trained. It requires time to adjust the sight to all the relations of truth. At first we see but little of what we hold as our faith. By and by we realize that what we thought we held entirely in our little hands is so great and glorious that it fills the universe. Then we ask ourselves if we know all of anything which we cannot see entirely around; we begin to understand that those on the other side of the truth which we are looking at must see what we cannot, as we see what is dark to them. And then, from fighting them, we come at length to say: "Let us tell one another what each has seen; and though I cannot go where you are and you cannot come where I am, we can each add to the wisdom of the other." Thus we grow more tolerant—not of error, for there never ought to be tolerance of error—but of those who are looking at the same truth, and who are equally anxious to learn all its lessons.

The sincere man finds as the years go by that he has made many mistakes. A scientist finds that nine-tenths of the experiments of Science yield no results. They are mistakes, and yet are helps; for they show where truth is not. Do we make no experiments in our faith? Let us pity the man who answers "No." We make mistakes in reading our Bibles, and in interpreting them. Doubtless the early Church was honest when it burned heretics. The doctors of the Inquisition

were probably trying to serve God. Loyola was as sincere as Luther. Such men misread their Bible. If they had lived to properly understand it they would have repudiated their own action. The ministers in the South thought that the Bible upheld slavery; they preached that: we may honor their loyalty to conviction, but God taught them that the Bible was a larger and better book than they had dreamed. Those who realize how many mistakes they make are not anxious to climb into the judgment-seat to judge others. As men grow older they study more and more to find the truth which each consecrated soul has found, rather than opportunities to emphasize a brother's mistakes. Those who look back over many years, and see them lined by narrowness and prejudice, who see how often they have fallen, how often they have been helped to know God better and to love one another better by the very ones whom they most distrusted, are most ready to say, "Brethren, the clouds are thick and dark about us; breakers are not far off; the sea is high. Let us all pull together, let us bear with each other patiently, and leave it for God to guide us all."

Things are now as they always have been. Each age thinks it is an age of transition; each generation thinks that all which was held sacred in the past is in danger. There are now, as always, a conservative and a radical element. Each party is anxious for its own success, each

is about equally anxious to call hard names and to misjudge those on the other side, each thinks it has all of the truth; while the fact is that all progress is the result of a process of action and reaction, and both conservatism and radicalism are essential. The Progressive is needed to push ahead and explore, and the Conservative is needed to keep him from going too fast and from forgetting the things already settled. Both conservatism and radicalism are manifestations of the life of God. Those whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder. As we get nearer Christ and are able to look from heights of age and experience, we can understand how he could have spoken words which are apparently so contradictory. "He that is not with me is against me;" and, "He that is not against us is for us." Both sayings are from the lips of Christ. Men may be unjust, ungenerous, unkind; they may forget the Golden Rule and the commandments of love; their tempers may flame like fire; but if they have *the life*, it is growing, and some time the fruit will appear in sweeter, more generous, and more chastened spirits.

Spiritual life manifests itself also by growth in capacity. A tree receives more light, air, and moisture, and casts more widely its hospitable shadows until the beginning of its decadence. If, now, any form of life exists forever, it follows of necessity that its capacity will forever increase. "To him that hath shall more be given."

As senses are made more sensitive by use, so are powers of spiritual receptivity enlarged as men become more spiritual ; and the process goes on through the ages. Savages can receive only hints of truth which to larger souls are commonplaces. A scientist lives in a different world from a peasant's because he can receive from mountain and lake, from sky and star, suggestions and impressions to which his humbler neighbor is impervious. The more knowledge one possesses, the more it is possible to acquire. Certain truths are to us like stars at midnight, which are larger than the points of light we see ; to better eyes they expand into globes of fire, or into worlds with profuse vegetation and multitudinous life. So, to finer spiritual discernment, there will be larger and truer disclosures of the everlasting mysteries. Capacity to know God must increase with each new disclosure of God. This process will continue until growth ceases, or until there is no more to learn about the infinite. Eternal life necessitates eternal growth in capacity. Each soul that is open to God will, day by day, be able to receive and comprehend more of God.

Capacity for sympathy must increase in the same ratio as capacity for knowledge. With his boundless sympathy, Christ entered perfectly into the human condition of other lives. He was sensitive to all wants and woes. He asked not whether men had names, but whether they had sorrows. He responded to the least touch of

humanity as a harp responds to the faintest breath of the wind. Spiritual growth manifests itself in increased likeness to Christ; the more like him, the larger the capacity for sympathy. He bore griefs and carried sorrows: and those like Christ ever enter more and more into the condition of others, and are ever gathering unto themselves the burden of the world's suffering and sin. But it may be asked: Will not the necessity for sympathy and service cease in the sphere to which we are moving? In the sphere in which God is it has not ceased. It is not possible to speak with authority about these things, but it may well be doubted whether the time will ever come when the universe will not be the abode of life in process of development toward higher conditions. Our system may be rolled together like a scroll and its elements melt with fervent heat, while still other systems fill immensity and are peopled with races moving evermore toward higher and finer states of existence. While such conditions endure, there will remain limitless fields for activity. So long as it is permitted men to grow in likeness to the Divine, it must follow that capacity to sympathize with all that concerns humanity will become larger and more sensitive. The perfect Man sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and his heart broke on the cross. His capacity for sympathy was too great for his physical body, and that was laid aside; but his Spirit continues the ministry. Those

who become like him may find themselves fainting and falling as the burden on their hearts grows heavier; but let them learn from their Master that life and capacity continue to grow and bless when the physical shell is no longer able to contain them. What a state will be realized when the whole Church of God, entering into the human condition as Jesus Christ did, bears the griefs and carries the sorrows and sacrifices for the sins of all the races of men!

Capacity for enjoyment will increase forever. Rothe once said, "Our organ of emotion is destined for eternity no less than our organ of understanding." Capacity for happiness, as well as capacity for knowledge, will never cease to grow. This also is inevitable. Much sorrow results from inability to express emotion. Strains of music rouse not memories, not hopes, not clear ideas, but rather lead up from interior silences tides of feeling which have no voice. Great thoughts, thrilling joys, boundless aspirations almost reach expression and yet are held down by invisible hands. Melancholy results. If these emotions had utterance, all existence would be glorified. Happiness is largely freedom from limitation. Limitations fall aside with spiritual growth, and individuals are able to be themselves. Maturity can enjoy more than childhood. Each well-spent year cuts more of the cords which bind to annoyance and weariness. Joy enlarges the capacity for joy, as thinking strengthens ability to

think. The gladness of the present is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. The happiness of the future is symbolized in the revelation by music; by that majestic and glorious symbolism is taught the lesson that the joy of eternity is too great for description in human words: it can only be hinted at by the language of the unutterable. Songs, voices of many waters, harpers harping, great and marvelous music, these aptly symbolize the happiness of the redeemed. The future joy made the cross endurable to the Master.

A rose can receive more sunlight than a bud; a tree can shelter more singing birds than a single branch: so a human soul which through loss and much discipline has grown out of narrow conditions and away from false ideals, into a state of trust and reliance on the love that never fails, has capacities for enjoyment which smaller natures never possess. The only voice of the higher spiritual life is a song. Endless life necessitates endless growth in capacity to receive, to sympathize, and to enjoy.

Such possibilities, nay, such necessities, are before all who are born from above. The work of Christ cannot be measured by its results in time. Its object is, age by age, to lead men more and more toward the perfection of God, while age by age each becomes more and more like God and better able to comprehend revelations from Him. Our subject leaves all humble and

obedient souls in endless light. The beginning is in pain and limitation and loss; the culmination is without end, in glory everlasting.

O my friend, you who feel as if you had nothing, you who feel as if everything you ever longed for has been denied you, you who feel that you are of no account in this world and were better out of it, remember that if God did not want you here he would not allow you here. Remember also that you are being prepared for your eternal mission just like every other soul who has ever been anything or done anything,—by growth. Let the life grow. And you who are impatient because of the slowness with which some are progressing, who are troubled by their narrowness, or intolerance, or radicalism, let not your heart be troubled. There is more good in all men than their mistakes. You are judging by failures rather than successes. And remember that perhaps the one whom you criticise is growing toward God quite as fast as you; only while you are putting out fruit which is called tolerance, generosity, temperance, he is bearing fruit equally rich and beautiful which is called faith, activity, fidelity.

Life is a prophecy, but also a fulfillment. It grows. Even our divine Master when on earth, who took it upon him "to fulfill all righteousness," from his earliest years showed us the way of God's unvarying law for life, physical and spiritual,—he "increased in wisdom and in stat-

ure, and in favor with God and man." God's life will fill the earth, and in individuals will continue to grow throughout eternity. Who will attempt to describe the final condition of those who now are narrow, intolerant, unkind, selfish, when the good which has been implanted by Christ shall have had eternity in which to expand? It is enough to know that the life of the Son of God, growing in us more and more beneath the unshaded sun and by the living waters, will increase and expand until, in the everlasting blessedness of Paradise, there shall be realized the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

THE END.



